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PNA security detain would-be bombers

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian security men arrested two Islamists from the Gaza Strip on Friday as they tried to enter Israel laden with explosives, a Palestinian source said Sunday. A senior security official questioned by AFP in Gaza said only that "we have arrested individuals who were planning to carry out an attack against Israel." "We are pursuing our enquiries," he said without giving further details. According to the Palestinian source, the two Islamists are members of Islamic Jihad, a small group which remains committed to armed struggle against Israel. The two were detained as they tried to cut through the barbed-wire fence that separates Israel from the Gaza Strip.

Kurd rebels kill three Turkish militiamen

DIYARBAKIR(R) — Kurdisb rebels killed three members of a Turkish militia force in an attack on a village in southeastern Turkey, a security official said on Sunday. He said a group of 12 Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) guerrillas had tried to enter a village in Batman province on Saturday afternoon but had been fought off by members of the local "village guard" militia. Three militiamen died in the fighting. No PKK casualties were reported. Turkey employs more than 60,000 Kurdish guards to bolster its campaign against the PKK, which is fighting for self-rule in the mainly-Kurdish southeast of Turkey. More than 28,000 people have been killed in the conflict.

Schroeder wins German elections, ending Kohl era

BONN (AFP) — Opposition candidate Gerhard Schroeder's Social Democrats (SPD) won Germany's general elections Sunday, according to computer-projected results, ending the 16-year era of Chancellor Helmut Kohl and opening the way for a different ruling coalition.

In a surprisingly strong performance, the SPD took 41.2 per cent of the vote for the lower house of parliament, or Bundestag, soundly trouncing Kohl's Christian Democratic Union (CDU)/Christian Social Union (CSU) parties which had 35.0 per cent of the vote, according to ZDF television.

The figures were confirmed by near-identical ARD television projections.

The cigar-smoking, business-friendly, centrist-leaning Gerhard Schroeder, 54, thus brings the left back into power in Germany and will lead the world's third largest economy into the 21st century when the Bundestag confirms his four-year term.

Discontent due to high unemployment and weariness with Kohl propels Schroeder into the first leftist government since that led by Helmut Schmidt, who was replaced by Kohl in 1982, when the small liberal Free Democratic Party switched allegiance.

Kohl went on to win electoral victory after victory, but the prestige be won after overseeing German reunification in 1990 finally wore off Sunday. Voters in the east of the country who supported him in the 1990 and 1994 elections apparently deserted him.

But it was not immediately clear Sunday evening if Schroeder would be leading a new, leftist coalition or would have to form a left-right grand coalition.

The SPD appeared certain of a majority in the lower house of parliament, the Bundestag, in alliance with fellow leftists of the Greens Environmental Party.

Schroeder has, however, said he wants to be sure of a "solid" majority, and he said Sunday he would not begin working on the form of his government until Monday, when final results are known.

Schroeder Sunday ended a string of Kohl victories over four other SPD chancellor-candidates. Born in 1944, he represents post-war generations, while Kohl, 68, often speaks of his memories as a child of World War II.

"Voters have with this election fulfilled a generation change," Schroeder told a cheering crowd at SPD party headquarters in Bonn.

"After 16 years, the Kohl era is over," he added. "We must now radically modernise our country," Schroeder said.

He claimed to represent a "new middle" or "new centre" embracing left and the right — the political centre-ground he was aiming for in this election.

Schroeder will be only the third SPD chancellor in the history of federal Germany, which was founded in 1949.

It was also the first time that federal Germany has chosen a new chancellor in an election. Previous changes having taken place after votes of confidence in the Bundestag.

In later comments on television, Schroeder said the key to the SPD's success were the party's programme and the support it had shown him, particularly from SPD chief Oskar Lafontaine.

He said it was a "joint success" which paved the way for a "more modern, more socially just Germany."

The outgoing chancellor promptly accepted defeat. "The Social Democrats have won. The voters have decided," Kohl told a news

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Social Democrat candidate Gerhard Schroeder and party leader Oskar Lafontaine raise their hands in victory before supporters in Bonn on Sunday. Schroeder promised to pursue foreign policy continuity and battle mass unemployment as Germany's new chancellor (Reuters photo)

Kuwaiti deputy premier visits King in Washington

WASHINGTON (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday received at his residence in Washington Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Ahmad Al Sabah who wished the King a speedy recovery and conveyed to him greetings and good wishes from Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah.

During the meeting, attended by Jordan's Ambassador to the United States Marwan Muasher and Kuwaiti Ambassador in Washington Sheikh Mohammad Al Sabah, the two sides discussed bilateral relations.

Meanwhile, King Hussein sent a letter to Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz, the crown prince of Saudi Arabia, thanking him for his visit last Friday.

In his message, the King said he would not forget the noble feelings and the good wishes accorded to him by the Saudi royal family, noting that the visit left a deep impression on himself. Her Majesty Queen Noor and

Their Royal Highnesses Princes Hamzeh and Hashem.

King Hussein also expressed his delight at the invitation of Prince Abdullah for the King to visit Saudi Arabia and to perform the Umra, lesser pilgrimage.

JTC cuts direct line to Israel after financial dispute

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh

AMMAN — The Jordanian Telecommunications Company (JTC) has cut its direct line to Israel's state-owned Bezeq Telecom Company after a financial dispute, JTC chief said Sunday.

Ali Shukri, chairman of the JTC, told the Jordan Times that the direct line between the two countries had been cut earlier this month because Bezeq International Ltd., a unit of the state-owned Bezeq Israel Telecom, has not been paying its bills for the past year.

"They owe us $5 million, and they have been refusing to pay those bills since 1997," he said.

A report in Reuters yesterday, quoted a Bezeq source as saying that Bezeq does not owe the JTC any money.

The source said Jordan Telecom stopped connecting calls about two weeks ago, forcing what is considered Israel's largest international calling company to route calls to Jordan via a third country.

The source added that this change would not affect the quality of services and charges.

Bezeq had issued a statement saying it had invited Jordan's Telecom chairman for a meeting in Israel following unsuccessful talks in Jordan last month but that no date had been set.

Shukri stressed that the cut would not effect the services and call links with Israel since JTC deals with a private Israeli company, Golden Lines.

"Our work relation with Golden Lines has been going smoothly and perfectly," Shukri said, adding that the company was "very professional" and has been paying its bills regularly and on time.

According to Shukri, JTC had been dealing with Bezeq since the signing of the peace treaty in 1994. But, he said, "although there is an agreement, they have decided not to pay their bills."

Senate panel gives failing grades to economic reform programme

By Ghalia Alul

AMMAN — Jordan's privatisation process, its economic reform programme, and its overall policy to encourage free market development, all received failing grades by the Senate Economic and Financial Committee Sunday.

The privatisation process — inherited by the newly-appointed government from previous administrations — has thus far proceeded in slow motion because of "hesitation and procrastination," committee members said.

"Jordan still needs the revenues of privatisation — slowing the pace [of the process] will only slow the recovery," economist Fahd Fanek wrote in a column published in the Jordan Times last month.

Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh recently said negotiations are under way to sell 40 per cent of the Jordan Telecommunication Corporation to the highest bidder.

Plans to privatise the debt-ridden state airline, Royal Jordanian (RJ), have taken off with the initialling of agreements with the French bank Paribas and the English law firm, Clifford Chance, earlier this month. The deals will assist in the restructuring and eventual sale of a large stake of RJ.

The Senate committee said in a statement issued after an expanded meeting with the government's economic team that Jordan's success in macro-economic stabilisation has not been matched by substantial progress in structural reforms.

"The economic reforms which achieved this macro-economic growth should have been followed by an equal growth in other sectors of the economy," said the statement. "Therefore it is difficult to achieve sustainable macro-economic stability without implementing other comprehensive structural reforms."

The economic restructuring programme has succeeded in bringing down inflation from 25.7 per cent in 1989 to about four per cent since 1994, stabilising the exchange rate of the dinar, decreasing the budget deficit as a percentage of the gross domestic product (GDP) from 81 per cent in 1991 to five per cent in 1994 and 1995, and reducing foreign debts as a percentage of the GDP from 223 per cent in 1989 to about 90 per cent in 1997, the statement said.

But the government's disclosure in June that the economy has been growing at a snail's pace raised questions about the ability of the economic reform programme to generate growth.

The government announced this summer that the 1996 and 1997 GDP growth figures did not exceed 0.8 per cent and 2.5-3.0 per cent respectively down from the projected five per cent and 5.2 per cent.

The committee, seeking to diagnose the country's economic ills, said after revising the contribution of different important sectors to the GDP during the past 12 years — five years before the launching of economic reforms in 1989 and seven years after — it found that no tangible results were achieved in structuring the productive sectors.

The committee added that the GDP has increased by 45 per cent from 1990 to 1996 — more than two-thirds of this percentage was achieved in financial, insurance and real estate services, indirect taxes and construction.

"The contribution of the agricultural and industrial sectors to the increase in the GDP was minimal, it added.

"We conclude that Jordan failed to meet its commitment to a development policy targeted towards free market competition, developing the country's competitive edge and enhancing local economic strengths."

Growth in exports, which should have increased by 10 per cent annually at current prices to enable the country to pay the principal of the

(Continued on page 7)

Albright meets with Arafat, Netanyahu separately

NEW YORK (R) — U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright held separate talks with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu Saturday night in a fresh effort to conclude a peace deal and forestall Arafat's threat to declare a Palestinian state.

After seeing Arafat, Albright told reporters the meeting was "good" one but she and other U.S. officials declined to elaborate.

She then drove several blocks to Netanyahu's heavily secured hotel and held an 80-minute meeting with the Israeli leader. There was no immediate word on the results of that session.

Albright, who spent last week in New York for the opening of the U.N. General Assembly, returned to the city late Saturday after attending the wedding of a close aide in Washington.

She is shuttling between the two cities as part of an U.S. urgent push in the next few days to try to lock-in progress on key issues that Israel and the Palestinians have been negotiating for 18 months without success.

The aim is to announce some kind of concrete progress next week. Arafat and Netanyahu are to meet separately with President Bill Clinton in Washington then but officials say a three-way meeting could be arranged if events warranted it.

"The Israelis have done their half and we're waiting to see what the Palestinians are going to do on security," one Israeli diplomat said.

U.S. officials have said Albright may hold more meetings on Sunday.

U.S. spokesman James Rubin said there was no expectation Albright's efforts would soon achieve the comprehensive accord on further Israeli troop withdrawals from the West Bank and Palestinian security commitments that the two parties have been seeking.

Instead, in an effort to salvage a peace process that has deteriorated ominously, the United States is seeking in the near term partial agreements that "advance or solve key issues," Rubin said.

"That doesn't mean it's an agreement and it's an accord. It just means that key aspects can be agreed," he told reporters at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, where Albright is staying and hosted the Arafat meeting.

This is at least a temporary shift in U.S. strategy, which up until now had been aimed at a comprehensive troop withdrawal and security accord that would open the door to "final status" Israel-Palestinian negotiations.

The partial agreement under discussion would not be the key that leads to final status talks, Rubin said.

He has not specified what a partial agreement might cover.

But major items under discussion include security, withdrawal of Israeli troops from the West Bank, establishment of a Gaza industrial site and an airport, and "unilateral actions" that could harm peace efforts, like further Israeli settlements or a declaration of Palestinian statehood.

Washington is trying to bridge an impasse between Israel and the Palestinians over a U.S. proposal for an Israeli troop withdrawal from another 13 per cent of the West Bank in return for tougher Palestinian moves against Muslim militants.

Differences have centred on the nature of the Palestinian security measures and an Israeli demand that three per cent of the land it hands over should be held as a "nature preserve" under Israeli security control.

Netanyahu said last Thursday the two sides were near agreement on the nature preserve. But Palestinians must do more to assure Israel land handed over "does not become a base for terrorism," he said, Arafat, signalling frustration with the slow-moving peace process, has threatened to declare a Palestinian state when he addresses the U.N. General Assembly on Monday.

The Americans fear this would be another major blow to negotiations and they have urged other Arab leaders to try to prevent it.

Rubin said Albright would "surely" make that point directly to Arafat.

"All we can say is our view and our view is it would be a mistake and not helpful for Chairman Arafat to make a unilateral statement including a statement about declaration of a Palestinian state," he said.

Rubin stressed that the United States also opposes unilateral actions by Israel on subjects — like settlement building — that by agreement are set aside for resolution in final status negotiations.

But he said it is not Arafat's

(Continued on page 7)

When rescheduling debts is no longer an option, government must resort to the art of persuasion

By Ghadeer Taher

AMMAN — Jordan will have to dig a little deeper into its pockets come the year 2000 to service its $6.5 billion debt unless foreign debtors agree to write-off or swap some of its financial obligations.

By then, Jordan, no longer eligible to reschedule a major portion of its debt, will have to begin making principal payments, exerting more pressure on an already sluggish economy, according to economists.

The finance ministry will have to pay over $700 million in the year 2000 with gradual increases for several years after that. By comparison, Jordan has paid $535 million in 1997, $581 million in 1996 and $461 million in 1995.

Economists predict more hard times ahead for an economy plagued with deepening social and economic woes and growing at a mere 2.5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP).

"We can manage [to repay the debt due] but it will certainly put further strain on the economy and affect our ability to target our priorities," one economist said, referring to much needed funds for programmes to stem increasing poverty and rising unemployment.

The new government, mandated to fight corruption, quicken snail-paced reforms and consolidate the stability of the Jordanian dinar while reigning in public spending, will find its job that much tougher when it comes time to make good on its debt.

Jordan, which has spent most of the decade implementing a strict IMF restructuring programme after a severe economic crisis in 1989, had rescheduled $2.8 billion of its debt.

Repayment of the debt, which has been reduced from 190 per cent of GDP in 1990 to 90 per cent today, will be financed through new borrowing, remittances, and exports, thus avoiding tapping into the treasury's foreign reserves, an economist said.

One way to reduce the burden on the economy is to convince debtor countries to forgive or grant debt swap equity, officials and economists said.

Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, in his policy statement to the Lower House of Parliament, said Jordan was engaged in serious negotiations with major donor countries, including Germany, England and Japan for debt forgiveness or converting some of the debts into local investments.

Nearly half of the country's debt, $3 billion, is owed to the governments of Japan, England and France. The Kingdom's debt to commercial banks makes up only 10 per cent of the total debt.

Many European countries have accepted the principle of debt forgiveness and/or debt equity swaps, but economists do not expect Japan, which is owed $1.8 billion, to accept this arrangement.

Successive governments have succeeded in reducing the debt through debt forgiveness, swaps and buy backs.

As a reward for signing the 1994 peace treaty with Israel, the United States forgave Jordan $700 million in debt. Also in 1994, the United Kingdom forgave Jordan $70 million.

France has granted Jordan millions of dollars in debt swap equity and the government over the last seven years has purchased parts of its debt at a discount.

"Jordan has a good chance of getting debt equity swaps but the government has to encourage investment opportunities in order to use the money," said an economist.

Seven Algerians killed in latest attacks — papers

ALGIERS (R) — Seven people died in the latest bloodshed in Algeria, two of them villagers killed by Muslim rebels trying to carry out a massacre in a village, newspapers reported on Sunday.

The daily El Watan reported that 30 rebels stormed the village of Ouled Hadou in the province of Mascara, 300 km west of Algiers, oo Friday and cut the throats of two peasants.

The assailants tried to kill more villagers hut government security forces intervened quickly to prevent a massacre, it said.

The government troops forced the guerrillas to flee into oearby woods, El Watan added without saying whether there were casualties among the attackers or on the governmeot side.

In another attack, Muslim rebels shot dead two pro-governmeot militiameo oo Saturday when they raided Kadiria area in Bouira region, 90 km east of Algiers, the oewspaper Liberte, without giving details.

In the eastern coastal province of Skikda, troops killed three rebels on Saturday in a military operation in Azzaba area, a guerrilla strooghold, Liberte said.

Algeria has been racked by violeoce since early 1992 when the authorities cancelled a general electioo in which radical Islamists had takeo a commanding lead.

More than 65,000 people — civilians, soldiers, policemen and rebels — have been killed in the North African country since then, according to Western estimates.

RABIN ASSASSIN'S ACCOMPLICE WITH FAMILY: **Margalith Har-Shefi, the 23-year-old friend of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's assassin, stands Sunday in a Tel Aviv court alongside her mother (C) and a relative. The court sentenced Har-Shefi to nine months in prison for failing to prevent Rabin's murder despite knowing that his assassin Yigal Amir was stalking the prime minister (Reuters photo)**

One charged after swoop on Muslim suspects

LONDON (R) — One man has been charged with possession of a prohibited weapon following last Wednesday's arrest in London of seven Muslim suspects in an anti-guerrilla police swoop, a police spokesman said on Sunday.

He said another of the seven people arrested had been released, while the other five were still detained under Britain's immigration rules.

The spokesman declined to identify the men involved, but said the individual who had been charged would appear in court on Monday.

A spokesman for the Muhajiroun group, which lobbies for an "Islamic world order," told Reuters on Thursday that the seven people involved were six Egyptians and a Saudi Arabian citizen.

Israeli court releases settler who killed Palestinian

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — An Israeli court ordered Sunday the release of a Jewish settler who had been uoder house arrest for killing a Palestinian youth 10 days ago near Ramallah in the West Bank.

The Jerusalem court imposed only ooe restriction oo the free movement of the settler Avshalom Ladani — he is forbidden to return to the West Bank so that he will not incite revenge attacks, a court official said.

A week ago the court released Ladani, 35, from the settlement of Dolev near Ramallah to a Jerusalem youth hostel where he remained under surveillance.

According to a hallistics analysis, Ladani shot and killed 16-year old Iyad Karadssi after his car was hit by stones.

Ladani argued that he fired in self-defence but bystanders said he got out of his car to fire at the stone-throwers before disappearing.

Settler groups have mounted a vigorous campaign to have Ladani freed while the Palestinian Authority has demanded that he be extradited to stand trial in a Palestinian court.

Israel's judicial authorities have historically shown leniency to Jewish settlers accused of killing Palestinians, including childreo, by not pursuing cases or by handing down only symbolic sentences.

Nineteen killed in factional violence in Somalia

MOGADISHU (AFP) — At least 19 people were killed and 21 others wounded when two rival factions fought in the south-central Somali towns of Baidoa and Burhakaba, a spokesman for one faction here told AFP on Sunday.

Mohammad Aden Ali "Qalinle," spokesman for the Rahanwein Resistance Army (RRA), said his group's fighters clashed with militiamen loyal to south Mogadishu strongman Hussein Aidid on Saturday.

He said that Aidid's forces lost five men while 14 of RRA fighters and civilian sympathisers were killed in the fighting.

Most of the wounded were also RRA supporters, Qalinle added.

"We suffered more casualties because the two areas where the fighting took place are inhabited by the Digil Mirifle clan who support the RRA," RRA spokesman in Nairobi Issaq Hassan Hussein told AFP.

"Aidid's men used armed trucks in the fighting but RRA did not," Hussein said. Aidid's fighters stole some 100 camels from members of the Rahanwein clan during the fighting, he added.

The Bay and Bakol regions of southern Somalia, where Baidoa and Burhakaba are situated, have seen frequent battles pitting the local Rahanwein community against Aidid's militia who seized the region in 1995.

A spokesman for Aidid's faction denied that his fighters attacked Baidoa and Burhakaba, saying that Aidid's forces only chased away bandits who killed two civilians.

The two towns were calm but tense on Sunday and travellers arriving in Mogadishu from the area said Aidid's militiamen were escorting traffic in or out of the towns.

They said the fighting was sparked by the killing of two members of Aidid's Habr Gedir clan by RRA fighters.

But Qalinle denied that the RRA killed civilians and promised to investigate the claim. He accused Aidid's loyalists of fomenting trouble in the area.

Israeli lawmaker calls for preemptive strike on Iran

TEL AVIV (AP) — Branding the leaders of Iran "insane," a member of the moderate wing of Israel's parliament Sunday called on Israel to consider a pre-emptive strike, after Iran paraded missiles that could reach Israel.

But Uzi Landau, chairman of the Israeli parliament's foreign affairs and security committee, criticised that call, saying such remarks could heighten the likelihood of Israel being targeted.

Ephraim Sneh, a general in the Israeli army reserves and a leading member of the moderate Labour party, asserted that international efforts to keep Iran from acquiring long-range missiles and atomic weapons have failed. He said Israel does not have the capability to defend against this threat.

"I am talking about the possibility, if we have no choice, to deliver a conventional counter-strike or pre-emptive strike," he told Israel's Channel Two.

Iran displayed its medium-range Shahab-3 missile during a military parade Friday. The missile, which Iran tested in July, has a range of 1,300 kilometres.

Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu said Israel has "exceptional" means to counter the threat from Iran, but warned in an interview from New York on Israel Radio that "a strategic threat against us is developing." He said it confirmed Israeli assessments over the past two years, and called for international efforts to stop Iran's missile and weapons programmes.

Landau told Israel Radio that nations actually planning a pre-emptive strike don't talk about it in advance, giving the other side a chance to prepare. In addition, he said, "unnecessary chatter makes Israel a higher-priority target." Landau said he was not playing down the threat to Israel from Iran, but noted that Iran has other potential enemies, like Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan.

Sneh said Iran's Shahab-3 missile will be operational next year, before the Arrow anti-missile system, a joint Israel-U.S. project now in the testing stage. He said Iran is developing atomic weapons at the same fast rate.

"Together with the insane heads of state in Teheran... this constitutes a threat Israel cannot live with," he said.

He discounted recent moderate statements from Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, saying he is not the one who makes policy in Tehran.

Aden looks to port venture to recapture its former glory

By Haro Chakmakjian
Agence France Presse

ADEN — The Yemeni city of Aden, once a shipping hub during British colonial rule, has pinned its hopes on an ambitious container port and free zone project as well as the U.S. Navy to regain its past glory.

Yemen, one of the world's poorest countries, is "in a bad way, but in a bad way with a future. And the future is Aden," a Western diplomat said, predicting this southern port city would be "another Dubai" in 20 years.

The turning point for Aden, which boasts one of the world's finest natural harbours and is located half-way between Europe and the Far East, came in 1967 with the closure of the Suez Canal due to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The same year saw the end of British rule and the former South Yemen passed under leftist control until unification in 1990. A north-south civil war in 1994 only aggravated the neglect and decline of Aden.

But now the container port, although 50 days behind schedule, is set to open for business on March 17 with some 400 metres of quay wall completed out of an overall 700 metres.

By the end of the first phase in late May, it will have the capacity to handle 500,000 TEUs (20-foot equivalent units) a year, mostly for transhipment. Expansion in later phases will depend on the initial results.

The 187-million-dollar project is being developed by Yeminvest, a joint venture between the Port of Singapore Authority (PSA) and the Saudi group Bin Mahfouz, owned by a family of Yemeni origin.

The work since March 1996, with construction farmed out to Hyundai of South Korea, has created jobs for around 1,000 Yemeni workers and 140 foreign managers and consultants.

At the same time, the United States is drawing up plans to use Aden as an oil bunkering and resupply port for its Fifth Fleet, which has resumed port visits after a 30-year absence, a diplomatic source said.

On the downside, foreign contractors are voicing fears over corruption, which is rife in Yemen, and said the adjoining free zone project has been slow off the mark, opting to wait for the launch of the container port.

"It has to be step by step. We do not have the money to go faster," explained Derhem Noaman, a former army colonel and director of the Aden free zone authority, which is seeking foreign investors.

Despite a mini-construction boom — including a planned Holiday Inn — running parallel with the major projects, a series of unexplained bomb blasts has left some potential investors jittery.

"Economic projects are slow, and investors are looking for government encouragement. The bombs are the main issue, and of course it makes them think twice before investing," said a local banking source.

Paradoxically, he said, most construction projects for apartment blocks and business premises are being funded by northern businessmen, while southerners "don't want to risk it in Aden."

But contractors on the reclaimed land in the bay that will be home to the container port are steering clear of the complicated local politics.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Sudan wants dialogue with U.S.

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudan wants to open a dialogue with the United States to confront it over the U.S. missile strike on a pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum in August, a newspaper said here Sunday. "Efforts for a resumption of dialogue with Washington are continuing," said Khartoum's ambassador to Washington Mahdi Ibrahim, who arrived here Friday for consultations oo the issue, Al Rai Al Akher newspaper reported. "Khartoum will confront Washington with the crime it has committed against Sudan by unjustifiably striking Al Shifa factory," the ambassador said. The paper reported that Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail said recently that the government was planning to open talks either directly or through a third party.

Egyptian officer suspended for novel

CAIRO (AFP) — A senior officer was suspended from Egypt's police force for a month on Sunday for publishing a novel based on his experiences without obtaining prior permission from his superiors, police said. But General Hamdi Batran escaped outright dismissal after the interior ministry tribunal found no basis to charges he had revealed confidential information or damaged the reputation of the police force in his novel: "Diary of a Country Police Officer." The tribunal ruled that the views expressed in the book, a thriller about the abuses committed by the security services in Upper Egypt in their fight against Islamic militant groups, were Batran's own and that he was entitled to express them. "Basing its judgement on the principle of free speech, the interior ministry neither has nor plans to seize or ban publication of the book and will not discharge the general," the disciplinary tribunal said.

'Bomb kills four in Algeria'

ALGIERS (R) — A bomb explosion on Sunday killed at least four people and wounded 15 others in a town southwest of the Algerian capital Algiers, government security forces said in a statement. The bomb went off about at 1125 GMT in Khemis town, 100 km southwest of Algiers, they said.

Gulf property in Iraq to be rented out

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Property belonging to Gulf Arab nationals in the south of Iraq will be rented out and the proceeds given to their owners, an Iraqi newspaper said Sunday. "The renting of these properties will shortly be auctioned off and the amount generated will be paid in to special accounts in the name of the owner," the governor of the southern province of Bassora, Ahmad Ibrahim Hammach, told the Al Mussawer Al Arabi newspaper. There are 678 Kuwaiti-owned properties and 85 Saudi-owned properties in Bassora. The tenants will renovate and manage the properties, which include buildings, offices, shopping centres and palm groves. Iraq's cabinet recently authorised the renting of properties abandoned by Gulf nationals eight years ago during the invasion of Kuwait.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel. 4773111-19
PROGRAMME TWO
15:10 .....Cartoon — *Highlander*
15:30 Drama — The Genie From Down Under
16:00 .....Drama — Neighbours
16:30 .....Doc. — Last Frontiers
17:00 ..French Programme — Thalassa
18:00 .....Drama — Wind at My Back (Ep.2)
19:00 ..... Le Journal
19:15 French Programme — Science Actualites
19:30 ..... News headlines
19:35 ..Comedy — Hope and Gloria
20:00 .....Prespective
20:30 .....World Net
21:10 .....Good Guys, Bad Guys
22:00 ..... News in English
22:30 Mini-series — Frankies House (Ep.2)
23:59 ..... End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:05 .....Fajr
05:23.....(Sunrise) Duha
11:26 .....Dhuhr
14:51 .....'Asr
17:30.....Maghreb
18:47 .....'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifieh, Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366
Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4624811.
St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 5865897
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932
St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440
Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138
Church of Presentation, Sweifieh Tel. 5920146
The Uniate Catholic Church Tel. 4624757
The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190
Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679
The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052
The Armenian Catholic Church 4771331
The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Relative warm weather conditions will prevail during the day becoming moderate at night with winds northerly light to moderate. In Aqaba, it will be relatively hot, winds northerly moderate to active, and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman.....18/32
Aqaba.....17/34
Deserts.....22/35
Jordan Valley.....21/37

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 31 Aqaba 33 Humidity readings: Amman 28 per cent, Aqaba 50 per cent.

Following are the highest temperatures expected today in the following areas:
Ajloun 26
Jerash 33
Um Qays 32
Madaba 30
Petra 34
Dead Sea 39

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Bassam Karadsheh ...4389200
Dr. Khalid M'addi 5661144
Dr. Salman Daboubi ..5812518
Dr. Ranzi Mazzawi 4894788
Firas pharmacy 5661912
Al Asema pharmacy 5347632
Nairoukh pharmacy 4623672
Al Salam pharmacy 4636730
Yacoub pharmacy 4644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 4637660
Najib pharmacy 5347632
IRBID:
Dr. Issam Al Salih 246858
Al Quds pharmacy .....(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Ismail Tallawi 903469
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre.....4637111
Civil Defence Department.....5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341
Civil Defence Emergency.....199
Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777
Fire Brigade.....4617101
Blood Bank.....4775121
Highway Police.....5343402
Traffic Police.....4896390
Public Security Dept.....4630321
Hotel Complaints.....5605800
Price Complaints.....5661176
Water & Sewerage Complaints 4897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 4787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs.....5661101
Jordan Televisi.....4773111
Radio Jordan 4774111
Water Authority 5680100
J. Electricity Authority ...5815615
Electric Power Co.... 4636381
RJ Flight Information....44-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921199
The Islamic, Abdli 5666131/7
Hussein Medical Centre 5856856
Luzmila 4630195
Khalidi Maternity.....4644281/6
Akileh Maternity.....4642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362
Malhas, J. Amman. 4636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 5607071
Shmeisani Hospital 5669131
University Hospital 5353444
Al-Muasher Hospital ..5667227/9
Al-Ahli, Abdali 5664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen...4777101/3
Al-Bashir.....4775111/26
Army, Marka 4891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital ...5602240/50
Amal Hospital 4891611/15
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital.....(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital .....(09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital.....(09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital .....(09)99099
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital .....(02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital .....(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital .....(02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 44 (52700).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:30 .....Jeddah (RJ)
08:30 .....Damascus (RJ)
08:45 .....Sanaa, Aqaba (RJ)
08:45 .....New Delhi (RJ)
09:20 .....Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:20 .....Beirut (RJ)
16:00 .....Cairo (RJ)
16:30 .....London (RJ)
16:40 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:15 .....Istanbul (RJ)
17:45 .....Kuwait (RJ)
18:40 .....Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)
20:35 Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok (RJ)
00:10 .....Jakarta (RJ)

Other Flights
09:30 .....Cairo (MS)
13:10 .....Bahrain (GF)
14:05 .....Vienna (OS)
14:40 .....Doha (QR)
14:45 .....Khartoum (SD)
17:40 .....Beirut (ME)
18:05 ..... Frankfurt (LH)
18:45 .....Dubai (EK)
21:15 .....Istanbul (SD)
21:25 .....Tel Aviv (LY)
22:45 .....Athens, Beirut (OA)
00:30 Amsterdam, Damascus (EK)

Royal Wings (RW)
09:20 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA and proceeding to Marka Airport) (RW)
17:00 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
21:15 Tel Aviv (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
22:25 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:00 .....Beirut (RJ)
10:45 ....Frankfurt, London (RJ)
11:30 .....Istanbul (RJ)
11:35 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
11:45 .....Kuwait (RJ)
12:15 ..... Cairo (RJ)
20:15 .....Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
20:40 .....Damascus (RJ)
21:05 .....Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
21:25 ....Al 'Ain, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
22:25 .....Tehran (RJ)
22:45 .....Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights
05:15 .....Istanbul (TK)
05:35 .....Larnaca (CY)
06:30 .....Paris (AF)
07:20 .....London (AF)
10:30 .....Cairo (MS)
14:00 .....Bahrain (GF)
14:50 .....Vienna (OS)
15:30 .....Doha (QR)
15:45 .....Istanbul (SD)
19:00 .....Beirut (ME)
19:45 .....Dubai (EK)
22:10 .....Tel Aviv (LY)
22:15 .....Khartoum (SD)
01:30 .....Amsterdam (KL)

Royal Wings (RW)
07:00 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
08:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
19:45 Tel Aviv (from QAIA) (RW)
20:30 ...Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)

Queen, U.S. Vice President Gore address cancer rally

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor, U.S. Vice President Al Gore and political activists spoke at "The March," a rally held this weekend in Washington D.C. which drew tens of thousands of cancer survivors, their families and friends, a press release said Sunday.

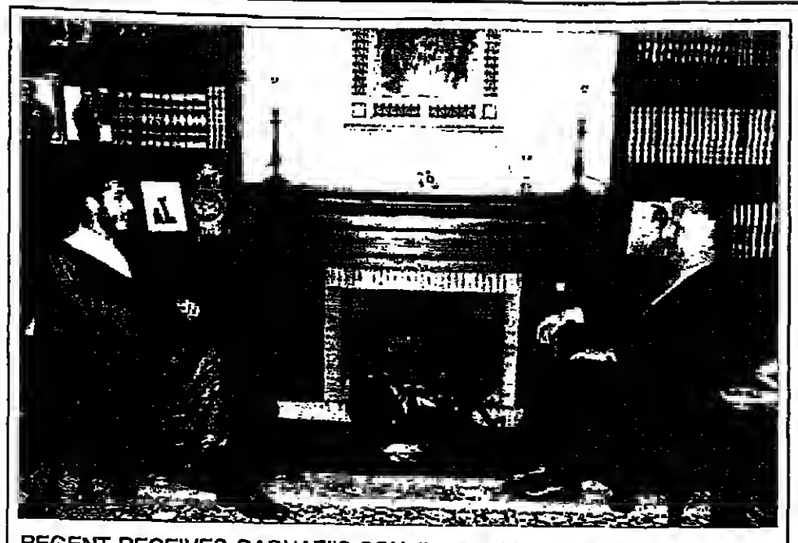
In his speech, Vice President Gore said each person at the rally represented "a renewed commitment to end cancer." Gore added that the U.S. declared "war on cancer" more than a quarter of a century ago and vowed that this generation would be "the generation that wins this war."

In her remarks, Queen Noor said she heard of the rally from her daughter Princess Iman, who decided to participate and "use her faith, love and optimism to benefit many others suffering from this cruel enemy."

She noted that in this year alone, "while 10 million people worldwide will be stricken with cancer, 15 per cent of these cases are preventable." The Queen added that she joined His Majesty King Hussein in expressing their thanks and gratitude "for all the love and prayers of not only our Jordanian family but people throughout the world and here in the United States where he is undergoing treatment," saying that "these prayers and that spirit of family meant so much to all of us and can make all the difference."

Queen Noor said the impact of the rally would be felt not only in the U.S., but would also "make a difference to the health prospects of people around the world" by placing cancer care as a high priority on social and national agendas. She said Jordan's satellite links with the United States, for example, provide live telemedical educational conferences, medical consultations and exchange of information.

Earlier, King Hussein and Queen Noor met with the organiser of "The March." King Hussein expressed his support and admiration for their efforts, affirming that "we will all soldier on together."



REGENT RECEIVES QADHAFI'S SON: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Sunday meets with Al Sa'edi Muammar Qadhafi, son of Libyan President Muammar Qadhafi. Qadhafi, who is head of the Libyan Soccer Federation and president of the Libyan Olympic Committee, conveyed President Qadhafi's greetings to His Majesty King Hussein and to the Crown Prince. The Regent underlined Jordan's desire to develop relations with Libya. Qadhafi expressed his country's wish to enhance bilateral relations with the Kingdom in all fields, particularly in health and economic fields. Attending the meeting were Royal Court Chief Jawad Anani and Libyan Chargé d'affaires Abdul Hamid Farhan (Photo by Boghos)

Consumers group to hold conference on rights awareness

By Randa Naffa

AMMAN — Aiming to draw more attention to the importance of consumer protection and consumer rights, the Jordan Consumers Protection Society plans to open a national conference on Tuesday, said Mohammad Obeidat, head of the society.

At a time when Arab countries lack appropriate mechanisms to face the effects of globalisation, the consumer must be protected from fraudulent practices by manufacturers and vendors as well as government measures that might infringe on their rights as consumers, Obeidat said.

"In this atmosphere of a growing new economic order, the consumer remains the major but weakest party involved and needs support from all sides, especially in legal aspects," Obeidat told reporters yesterday.

Speaking at a press conference organised by the society, Obeidat said "the conference, the first such event in the region, is timely because it will offer participants a chance to discuss the negative and positive effects of the economic reform programme on consumers."

Jordan expects the economic reform programme launched in 1989 and scheduled to end in 1999 to be extended by the International Monetary Fund for an additional three years, according to economists.

The three-day conference will include participants from Arab countries, the United States, Sweden and Germany.

"Among participants are experts from the European Union, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, the World Health Organisation as well as representatives from Arab ministries," said Obeidat.

With a total of 17 Arab countries taking part, the conference will try to strengthen Arab efforts to reinforce economic mechanisms such as competition and anti-trust laws and the law to protect consumers, according to Obeidat.

Jordan and Tunisia have the most experience in encouraging measures to protect consumers, having been the first two Arab countries to start societies concerned with the issue.

"We feel that the Arab World is taking genuine action to protect consumers through setting up organisations concerned with consumer protection. Sudan and Yemen recently established such societies," Obeidat said.

He stressed that the conference will allow for the exchange of experience and knowledge between Arab countries and will strengthen Arab dialogue on the matter.

The conference, to be held under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, will also discuss issues pertaining to the importance of standards for consumer protection, legal action, the contributions of governmental and non-governmental organisations, and the experiences of some countries in consumer protection.

The draft by-laws of the Arab Consumer Federation will be discussed during the conference.

It aims at protecting the Arab consumer and guarding against dangers to life and health through the interaction between member organisations.

The consumers' protection society was first established in 1989 as a voluntary organisation in a bid to raise awareness on consumer problems by conducting field and scientific studies and by preventing monopolies and manipulation of prices.

The society was the only organisation to file a case against the government over the recent water contamination crisis and the first to alert the public to the government's intent to lift bread subsidies in 1996.

Consumer protection society says Zai plant water potable

AMMAN (J.T.) — The president of the Jordan Consumers Protection Society on Sunday said water pumped to western Amman from the Zai Water Treatment Plant is potable and fit for human consumption following recent measures taken by the concerned authorities.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, quoted Mohammad Obeidat as saying that the quality of the plant's water now meets international specifications.

Obeidat, who was addressing a press conference at the Water Ministry, added that the ministry now regularly provides the society with the results of analyses on samples from the plant, which he said prove that the water is safe to drink.

Obeidat's statement followed Health Minister Nael Ajlouni's announcement Saturday that water from the Zai plant, which supplies 40 per cent of Amman's needs, does not need to be boiled before drinking.

The minister said that the water was free from pollutants that caused a crisis this summer, when the public complained of the water's foul smell and taste.

Obeidat called on the government to allow citizens to pay any accumulated dues to the Water Authority in three monthly instalments and to introduce a monthly system for payments.

Obeidat, whose organisation filed a lawsuit against the Water Ministry at the height of the crisis, also called for the creation of a higher water council, chaired by the water minister and grouping representatives of the public and private sectors, to monitor the quality of drinking water.

Meanwhile, the Water Authority announced Sunday that it will send personnel to read the metres of homes and institutions which received water from the Zai plant during July, August and September.

The procedure will precede the cancellation of any charges for water consumption by the public in western Amman districts for these months in implementation of a government announcement earlier this month.

A Water Authority official said some people in western Amman districts consumed large amounts of water knowing that it was coming to them free of charge.

The official urged the public to ration water to help the country save its resources.

IAF denies members' confidence votes signal support for government

By Francesca Ciriaci

AMMAN — The Islamic Action Front on Sunday denied that votes of confidence in the government of Fayez Tarawneh cast by two party members signalled the front's intention to support or join the Cabinet.

IAF Secretary General Abdul Latif Arabiyat said Deputies Mohammad Azaydeh (Madaba) and Abdullah Akaileh (Tafileh), who defied the opposition's boycott of the 1997 general elections, gave their yeas in Thursday's confidence vote without consulting the party.

"Therefore, their decision does not bear any consequences on the party, and people should not read anything into it."

Arabiyat told the Jordan Times that Akaileh and Azaydeh were only nominal IAF members and were not actively participating in party life.

He added that the IAF did not consider it necessary to take any disciplinary action against them for casting their vote in favour of the government.

Azaydeh and Akaileb joined another 62 of the 80 Lower House members — including leftist opposition leader Mohammad Ouran — in giving an 80 per cent approval to the newly-formed Tarawneh government.

The IAF, the political arm of the powerful Muslim Brotherhood, has not been part of any government since the coalition led by former Prime Minister Mudar Badran in 1990-1991.

Negotiations by successive Cabinets to include the IAF in governments have so far failed due to apparently irreconcilable differences over peace and normalisation with Israel.

But more recently, analysts and party sources said the more flexible IAF was distancing itself from the hard-line policies of the Muslim Brotherhood. They noted that last Autumn the party was much more lenient than its mother organisation in dealing with members who defied the boycott directives. While the Brotherhood expelled members who ran in the parliamentary polls, the IAF limited itself to freezing the membership of Akaileh and Azaydeh for six months.

The two deputies were reinstated in the party in June, a move that fuelled speculation on a change in policies and a supposed quest for more political and ideological independence from the Brotherhood.

Last week, the IAF and the Muslim Brotherhood played down their differences vis-à-vis relations with the Taleban militia in Afghanistan.

But the local press reported that while the Brotherhood was seeking to open up communication channels with the Taleban, the IAF opposed such a move.

Classmates of accused teen killer testify

By Rana Husseini

AMMAN — A schoolmate of Sa'eed Qashash, a 19-year-old student accused of murdering 11 family members and a lifetime friend, Sunday testified that he saw the defendant on the day after the murders and that he "appeared calm, did not talk a lot and his eyes were red."

Qashash, who pleaded not guilty last month, reportedly confessed to authorities to killing his father, mother, sisters, other family members and a close friend on June 10 because they were harassing him about the tawjihi (state high school exams).

"On June 11, after finishing a tawjihi exam, Sa'eed informed me that he did not do well because he had had a fight with his family and could not sleep or study the previous night," said the witness, Sufian Mohammad, 19.

"Sa'eed also showed me a small, old gun that he owned, approximately one month before the incident," Mohammad told the Criminal Court.

Another classmate, Muhannad Ahmad, 19, also testified Sunday, saying that Qashash gave him and Mohammad a ride to their homes on June 11 in the car of his brother-in-law, Jamal Turk, one of the victims.

"I noticed that there was dust and dirt in the back seat of the car," Ahmad said.

On Sept. 16, a construction worker testifying for the prosecution said a youth came to him on June 10 and bought 25 cement blocks. The witness said he helped the youth by loading the bricks in the trunk and the back seat of a car.

Relatives of the victims in previous court sessions refused to drop charges against the defendant.

If convicted of premeditated murder, Qashash could face the death penalty.

The tribunal, presided over by Judge Mohammad Ajarmeh and including Mifleh Mubeidin and Issa Hamdan, adjourned the case to Oct. 4 to hear the last prosecution witness, Mu'men Hadidi, head of the National Institute for Forensic Medicine.

Seminar examines issue of foreign funding to local groups

AMMAN (J.T.) — A seminar recently held by the Arab Media Institute analysed and tried to reconcile different views on foreign funding to local research centres and non-governmental organisations, an issue at the centre of a heated debate in recent years.

The AMI, an Amman-based centre specialised in press freedom and media issues in the Arab World, gathered for last week's discussion some of the most prominent intellectuals from both the ranks of opponents and supporters of foreign funding to local institutes.

Veteran communist Yaqnub Zayaddine, who has been one of the leading figures in a vehement four-year campaign against foreign research centres and their local partners, reiterated at the seminar the need for restrictions on foreign funding, according to an AMI press statement.

Opponents of foreign funding to local research centres contend that the involvement of foreign institutes in domestic issues would "corrupt" Arab thinkers and serve Israeli and Western interests. The issue surfaced after the signing of the 1994 peace treaty with Israel, and most foreign institutes have been accused together with their local partners of supporting American and Zionist policies.

Although rejecting isolation, Zayaddine reportedly stressed that more transparency and openness were required by local institutes receiving foreign funding in order for them to maintain their independence.

The AMI reported that sociologist Suleiman Sweiss, head of the Arab Organisation for Human Rights, stressed at the seminar that the current battle concerning foreign funding, fought with articles, boycotts, and press statements, lacked objectivity because it was based on ideological prejudices.

The press statement said Sweiss called on the state to fund local research centres.

Rejecting some intellectuals' fear of foreign centres and criticising the campaign against their local partners, economist Fahed Fanek emphasised that Jordan has a long way to go in order to profit from foreign funding. According to the AMI statement, Fanek said JD50 million in non-Jordanian funds are lost annually due to local institutes' failure to present proposals meeting all necessary requirements.

Lawyer Asma Khader attacked current legislation governing NGOs and research centres, which forbids them to accept any form of foreign funding. The women's rights activist noted that Jordan's current regulations on research centres are even stricter than Ottoman legislation, which in 1909 considered a legal and licensed society as any group of seven people who submitted their signatures to a notary public, the statement said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

FM leaves for U.N. meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib on Sunday left for New York to take part in the 53rd session of the United Nations General Assembly. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Ibrahim Dabbas said the minister's address to the meeting will focus on Jordan's role in the peace process and efforts to give it impetus on all tracks, particularly the Palestinian-Israeli track. Khatib will also stress the need for pooling efforts to combat terrorism and to solve several issues in different parts of the world such as Afghanistan, Kosovo and Africa, said Dabbas.

Tarawneh pledges support to departments

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh Sunday pledged that the government will provide the Public Security Department and the Civil Defence Department with all required technical and human resources. Tarawneh, who was speaking during visits to the two departments, voiced the government's appreciation of the two departments' efforts to ensure security and provide protection to the public.

Income Tax Department to issue refunds

AMMAN (Petra) — The Income Tax Department Sunday announced that it has initiated procedures to issue refunds to taxpayers who overpaid in 1997 and earlier years. Department Director General Mansour Haddadin said nearly 20,000 taxpayers are expected to receive refunds, adding that the department will place an announcement in the local press listing the dates and arrangements for issuing the refunds to the public. Haddadin made his statement one day after Finance Minister Michael Marto said his ministry has earmarked JD3.5 million in refunds for taxpayers who overpaid.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

* "Camille Claudel" at the French Cultural Centre Jabal Weibdeh, at 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

DARAT AL FUNUN SUMMER 98 FESTIVAL

"Summer 98" cultural activities at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, to last until Sept. 30, include:

EXHIBITIONS

* 50 years of graphic art from Lebanon and works by Jordanian artist Sahel Hiari at the Main House.

* Works by Iraqi artist Samer Usama and by Jordanian artist Said Haddadin at the Blue House.

* Installation works by Jordanian artist Samia Zaru at the Byzantine Church.

* Exhibition of photographs "Memory of a Place" by Jordanian artist Hussein Da'seh at the Museum.

LECTURE

*"La Jordanie" byMarc Lavergne at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, on Tuesday Sept. 29 at 6:30 p.m.

*Early Pre-history in Wadi Faynan" By Dr. Steve Mithen at the Friends of Archaeology Centre at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Works by graduates of the Arts Centre (including ceramics, paintings, and sculpture) at the centre, Mahmoud Irani St. (Tel. 5529619), until Oct. 8.

* "Jordan-Kuwait Industrial Show '98" at the Amman International Auto Exhibit, Airport Road (Telefax 5690753), until Oct. 2.

*Exhibition of caricatures of Arab personalities at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Oct. 30.

* Paintings by Mohammad Polise entitled "A Tune and Colour" at the City Hall, Ras Al 'Ain (Tel. 4743158), until Sept. 30.

* Display of Bani Hamida and Jordan River Designs products (rugs, cushions, wall-hangings, and quilts) at the Jordan River Designs showroom, until Sept. 30 (Tel. 4613081).

* Photography exhibition entitled "Les Cite's d'Artistes a Paris" at the premises of the Association of the Jordanian Plastic Artists, Jabal Weibdeh, until Sept. 30.

* Paintings by Rula Sbukairy at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Amman, until Sept. 30.

Archaeological institute to raise funds for site development

By Ahmad Khatib

AMMAN — The British Institute for Archaeology and History in Amman next month will hold a fund-raising night for the Wadi Faynan Project to "continue working on archaeological sites and developing the area."

On October 28, a quiz and party night entitled "The Enigma of Clay and Rock" will be held by the institute at Amman International Hotel to raise money for the project, which was initiated in 1994 under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Sumaya.

Wadi Faynan is located in Dana Nature Reserve, which sits on the Great Rift Valley edge, around two hours south of the capital.

According to the institute, as early as 6,500 years ago, Faynan was a major copper-mining and smelting centre. During the reign of the Roman emperor Diocletian (285-305 A.D.), many Christian slaves were sent to work in the mines and some were martyred. Evidence for planned agriculture in the area includes channels for diverting annual flood-waters into fields. In addition, several churches and cemeteries show the importance of the Byzantine community during the 5th and 6th centuries.

The project is a long-term endeavour of up to 10 years to develop an understanding of settlement life in the wadi from an archaeological point of view and a multi-disciplinary perspective, said an institute statement.

The statement said a map of aerial photographs is being prepared and various sites, including Khirbat Faynan and the Byzantine cemetery, have been mapped. A survey of the ancient remains is also being conducted.

According to the statement, the project's first stage investigates ancient land use and water management practices. Germany's Bochum Mining Museum and Jordan's Department of Antiquities have investigated the socio-economic and environmental impact of the local metal resources.

In June, the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature, which manages Dana Nature Reserve, complained that if the government reintroduces copper-mining in Wadi Faynan, the reserve will be "destroyed."

"The reintroduction of the copper mining is a big worry facing the reserve," a society representative said. "Non-sustainable copper mining in the area will destroy it forever."

In 1993, the government announced that it had no intention of mining the area, but some environmentalists have said authorities have shown renewed interest.

"The study of the past can play a tremendous role in shaping the policies adopted for the present and the future," said the statement. "The project will expand Jordan's heritage and promote eco-tourism."

Plans are also under way to assess the possibility of renovating the Roman water system, which provided the settlements in the wadi and their agricultural fields with spring water from the Sbara'a mountains.

Furthermore, the institute has plans to construct field research and visitors centres.

In winter 1995-96, rescue excavations at the Wadi Faynan South Cemetery were carried out by the institute and Yarmouk University's Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology. The cemetery is Christian and appears to date to the mid-fifth century. A total of 50 graves were excavated.

In Spring 1996, a team from several British universities investigated various aspects of land use in Wadi Faynan throughout time. This investigation included studies on agricultural and water systems of a large settlement dating to 4th and 3rd millennia B.C.

The institute is collaborating with the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature to improve the living conditions of the local people and reduce poverty by providing small-scale job opportunities at archaeological sites.

NATO grabs Bosnian Serb war crimes suspect

SARAJEVO (R) — NATO-led forces in Bosnia Sunday detained a suspected Serb war criminal accused of committing atrocities against Muslims and Croats during ethnic cleansing of the northern town of Bosanski Samac in 1992.

Stevan Todorovic, 41, was accused "of wilful killing and murder, wilfully causing great suffering, cruel treatment, inhumane acts, inhumane treatment, rape and torture," NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana said in Brussels.

NATO's commander in Europe, U.S. Army General Wesley Clark, said Sunday's SFOR action in an area manned mainly by U.S. troops showed that the military mission in Bosnia worked. "If SFOR meets people like this, it will take them into custody."

SFOR spokeswoman Sheena Thomson said it been a "calm operation", adding that no one had been injured.

A spokesman for the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) said Todorovic was expected to arrive in The Hague later Sunday and to appear before the court Monday morning at the earliest.

He will join the 25 other indicted war criminals in the tribunal's custody.

In a statement in Brussels, Solana said the action "serves as yet another warning to all those indicted for war crimes who are still at large that they will not escape justice".

He urged others indicted for war crimes to surrender immediately.

SFOR said the detention took place in the area of its multi-national northern division, based in the north-eastern town of Tuzla. It is led by U.S. forces and includes other nationalities.

"This action was undertaken in accordance with SFOR mandate which authorises it to detain such persons when encountered in the course of its duties," the SFOR statement added.

The alleged war crimes took place while Todorovic served as a police chief in Bosanski Samac in June and July 1992.

The town, now in Bosnia's Serb Republic, was occupied by Serb forces early in the 1992-1995 war, in which more than 200,000 people were killed and many more were made homeless.

Todorovic and five other Serbs — Slobodan Miljkovic, Blagoje Simic, Milan Simic, Miroslav Tadic, and Simo Zaric — were charged in July 1995 with atrocities against Muslims and Croats.

Three of them — Milan Simic, Zaric and Tadic — surrendered voluntarily to SFOR troops in February, the first Bosnian Serbs indicted for war crimes to do so. They have pleaded not guilty to these and other charges.

According to an indictment read aloud in the court in The Hague on Sept. 3, Bosnian Croats and Muslims made up more than half of Bosanski Samac's population of 33,000 in 1991.

On April 17, 1992, Serb military forces seized control of the town and by May 1995 fewer than 300 of the Bosnian Croat and Muslim residents remained.

To date the war crimes tribunal has publicly indicted 74 suspects, most of them Serbs.

An unknown number of "sealed" indictments also exists. Two of the accused have been convicted and sentenced.

The SFOR's Thomson said NATO-led troops in Bosnia had detained 13 individuals since July 1997, including Bosnian Serb twins mistakenly believed to be indicted war criminals in July.

Others had surrendered voluntarily.

French right, far-right face election tests

PARIS (R) — One third of France's senate seats were being contested Sunday in an indirect election that could deepen tensions within a fractious right bloc which lost control of the National Assembly 17 months ago.

But attention focused on one of three National Assembly by-elections in which the far-right National Front was trying to remedy its lack of seats in the lower house.

Cendrine Le Chevallier, wife of the National Front mayor of the Mediterranean port of Toulon, faced Socialist Odette Casanova in what was shaping up to be a close duel.

Two earlier polls, one won by the mayor and the other by Casanova, were annulled because of irregularities.

Overshadowed by a federal election in Germany, the indirect senate poll in which nearly 50,000 members of local and municipal councils were electing 104 members of the upper house has attracted little public interest.

The left-wing coalition of Prime Minister Lionel Jospin hoped to gain a handful of seats but was in no position to challenge the right's 223 to 98 majority in the traditionally conservative upper chamber.

The real prize in the election, at stake between the two main conservative parties, was the chairmanship of the senate, a strategic post which comes up for grabs next Thursday.

Ranking second in state hierarchy, the senate chairman becomes interim head of state pending new elections if the president of the Republic dies or is unable to remain in office.

Senate President Rene Monory, a 75-year-old member of the centrist Union for French Democracy (UDF), faces a challenge from Gaullist Christian Poncelet, 70, of the Rally for the Republic (RPR).

The outcome of the battle for the chairmanship depended on whether the RPR could gain seats at the expense of UDF Sunday.

The chairmanship duel looked likely to further strain the conservative coalition, in disarray since it lost a general election last year and dissidents allied with the National Front against the left after last March's regional elections.

Conservatives have been further hit by a series of probes into illicit party financing targeting both the UDF and President Jacques Chirac's RPR.

Two of the three by-elections to the National Assembly, in which left-wingers faced conservatives, were expected to show whether voters would punish the rightists further.

The Toulon by-election was taking place on the eve of a two-day trial that will decide the future of the National Front's 70-year-old leader Jean-Marie Le Pen.

An appeals court in Versailles will decide whether to uphold a lower court sentence declaring Le Pen ineligible to public office for two years for assaulting a female Socialist candidate during the 1997 general election campaign.

Ineligibility would prevent him from running in elections to the European Parliament next year and leave him open to a challenge from the National Front's ambitious number two, Bruno Megret.

Sri Lanka says 58 killed in fierce fighting

COLOMBO (R) — At least 58 combatants were killed when Tamil Tiger rebels attacked the army's defences in northern Sri Lanka and in fighting elsewhere, the defence ministry said Sunday.

The ministry said the rebels had attack troops manning defences south of Paranthan in northern Kilinochchi district in the early hours of Sunday.

"Ground troops estimate over 40 terrorists were killed and a large number wounded during the confrontation," the statement said, adding troops were in full control of the situation and clearing operations are in progress.

It said nine soldiers were killed and 29 wounded in the fighting that occurred some 300 km northeast of the capital Colombo.

Earlier military officials said 11 soldiers were killed and 32 wounded when the rebels attacked the defence lines at Paranthan with artillery and mortar shells.

The rebels said over the clandestine radio "Voice of Tigers" the attack was in remembrance of a guerrilla leader, Thileepan, who fasted to death in 1987.

The rebels decorated streets in the Wanni region, placed portraits of Thileepan and lit oil lamps in the Wanni region to mark the death anniversary Saturday, said the radio, monitored by Tamil residents in northern Vavuniya town.

The ministry in an earlier statement said nine rebels, including two female guerrillas, were killed in four separate clashes with government troops in northern Sri Lanka Saturday.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have been fighting for a separate homeland in Sri Lanka's north and east since 1983, accusing the Sinhalese majority of oppressing the Tamil minority.

Sri Lanka in June slapped censorship on war reporting by both local and foreign media after the military stepped up its campaign to capture a vital highway that could give it land access to the northern Jaffna Peninsula.

Independent reporting of the insurrection is not possible as the government bars journalists from visiting the war areas except when taken on a tour.

The government said in 1996 more than 50,000 people had died in the war. Since then several thousand soldiers and rebels have been killed or wounded.

Houseboats sandwich a sailboat along Houseboat Row after being hit by hurricane Georges on Key West (AFP photo)

Gulf Coast residents prepare for onslaught of Hurricane Georges

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Forecasters predicted Hurricane Georges would begin lashing the Gulf Coast with hurricane force winds Sunday, and more than a million residents have been told to evacuate.

"This is kind of like looking down the barrel of a shotgun and hoping it turns," said Louisiana State Police Lt. Col. Ronnie Jones.

Georges ripped slowly but furiously through the Caribbean, killing more than 300 people before it smashed into the Florida Keys with winds over 160 kilometres.

Forecasters said Sunday the storm may strengthen before it makes landfall, pushing tides up to 4.5 metres above normal.

While New Orleans is protected by 210 kilometres of levees, city officials worried that Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Maurepas could spill over their banks and send flood waters into the city and its suburbs.

At 5 a.m. (0900 GMT) Sunday, Georges was centred about 320 kilometres southeast of New Orleans, moving northwest at 16 kph with 177 kph winds.

Hurricane warnings were posted along 530 kilometres of coast from Morgan City, Louisiana, to Panama City, Florida. Hurricane watches were posted on the flanks of the warning area east to St. Marks, Florida, and west to Intracoastal City, Louisiana.

More than 1.5 million people were ordered or urged to leave New Orleans and low-lying coastal areas. Bumper-to-bumper traffic jammed Interstate 10 out of the city into the early hours Sunday, and the American Red Cross said it expects to house 35,000 evacuees in dozens of shelters around Louisiana.

Thousands more were told to leave coastal sections of Mississippi, Alabama and the Florida panhandle.

Mike McCarty and his wife said they didn't feel safe waiting for a flight scheduled to take them home to Columbus, Ohio, Sunday afternoon.

"We decided it would be best to just rent a car and drive home," he said Saturday night at New Orleans International Airport. "We're getting out of Dodge."

The centre of the storm was expected to reach the mouth of the Mississippi River, about 120 kilometres southeast of New Orleans, sometime between Sunday and Monday afternoon.

When it hits, the storm could have strengthened into a Category 3 storm with winds at 179 kph or greater.

"It could wreak havoc," said Paul Trotter of the National Weather Service. "A slow-moving, Category 3 storm would give us some high tides, heavy winds and lots of rain. When they coexist all together, that's where we'll get the devastation."

Forecasters said Georges could slow as it neared land, drenching some areas in Louisiana with up to 50 centimetres of rain.

Emergency officials in Mississippi closed beaches and the 11 casinos on the state's coast. Boats were moved inland, and the Coast Guard closed the Port of Gulfport to all commercial traffic.

Cambodian opposition party heads for coalition talks

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Under pressure from all sides, Cambodia's main opposition party is set this week to enter coalition talks with strongman Hun Sen aimed at ending two months of post-election uncertainty.

Scheduled for Tuesday, the talks between Prince Norodom Ranariddh's FUNCINPEC and Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party (CPP) will be the first formal talks over a coalition since the July 26 polls.

Although Hun Sen's party won 64 seats in the 122-seat National Assembly, it did not gain the two-thirds majority it needed to govern alone. FUNCINPEC won 43 seats while the Sam Rainsy Party took the remaining 15.

Following the elections, FUNCINPEC and former Finance Minister Sam Rainsy's self-named party linked up to protest alleged intimidation and fraud by the CPP, and held weeks of demonstrations in the capital.

But while most observers admitted the polls were marred by political violence in the run-up, international observers said the elections were "sufficiently free, fair and credible."

"This pragmatic — rather than principled — observation has placed huge pressure on FUNCINPEC and Sam Rainsy, who had counted on international sympathy for their complaints," explained a foreign analyst.

With few backers overseas, further pressure mounted on the opposition to compromise their threats of a National Assembly boycott when the revered King Norodom Sihanouk urged them to respect the election results.

Confident after his election win, Hun Sen also kept the pressure up with a tough crackdown on the opposition protests as violent mob clashes gripped Phnom Penh.

Hun Sen also warned opposition members he would remove their parliamentary rights and immunities if they went ahead with their threat to boycott the convening of the National Assembly.

All 122 MPs — including the reluctant opposition — were sworn in last Thursday, but violence continued right up to the opening ceremony held at the king's residence in the historic northern town of Siem Reap.

A rocket-propelled grenade attack on Hun Sen's CPP motorcade only just missed as the convoy made its way to the swearing-in ceremony.

But the CPP and security officials have backed away from initial accusations they made against the opposition over the attack, paving the way for the coalition talks this week with Prince Ranariddh.

Sam Rainsy, whose party has vowed to remain in opposition, has urged FUNCINPEC to continue pushing for reforms and to get its election complaints heard.

But while a coalition deal appears likely with a bowed opposition and Hun Sen set to remain premier, few see any immediate cause for hope for stability.

Prince Ranariddh and Hun Sen served as co-premiers following United Nations-sponsored elections in 1993, but the shaky partnership collapsed in July 1997 when Hun Sen ousted his partner amid heavy but brief street-fighting in the capital.

"The worry now is of more personal power rivalry being extended inside any new coalition deal and an eventual repeat of July 1997, leaving the crippling problems facing the country pushed aside," said a senior humanitarian aid worker.

"Economic hardship, increasing AIDS infection levels, human rights and only minimal and cautious foreign investment all need to be turned around."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Pope calls contrast between world's rich, poor truly intolerable

CASTEL GANDOLFO, Italy (AP) — Pope John Paul II decried Sunday what he called the "truly intolerable contrast" between the rich and poor of the world, saying the well-off were wrong to ignore the hungry, the homeless and the jobless. The Pope spoke on the feast day of St. Vincent de Paul, founder of a charity that fed and nursed the poor and sick. John Paul told the faithful gathered for his weekly Sunday address of the "truly intolerable contrast" between "the portion of humanity who enjoy all the advantages of economic well-being and scientific progress and the enormous masses who live in conditions of extreme poverty. "It isn't right to be resigned to the immoral spectacle of a world in which there are still those who die of hunger, who don't have homes, who lack the most elementary education, who don't have access to health care in case of sickness, who cannot find work." In their interest, he invoked his own insistence that a commitment to peace and justice must be an essential part of the preparations for the Roman Catholic Church's preparations for its 2000 Jubilee. The Pope spoke at his vacation retreat at Castel Gandolfo outside Rome, following his Sunday practice of interspersing a serious message with good-tempered acknowledgments of the chanting, singing, banner-waving pilgrims gathered below his window.

50 injured in explosion at popular café, 13 critical

PALMA DE MALLORCA, Spain (AFP) — Around 50 people were injured Sunday in an explosion at a café on the seafront in Palma de Mallorca, emergency services said. A police spokesman told AFP it appeared to have been a gas explosion. More than 30 people were hospitalised, at least five of them in critical condition, doctors said. There was no immediate information on the identities of the victims. The blast totally destroyed the Gran Café Capuccino, one of the most popular in the capital of the Balearic islands, and an area popular with foreign tourists. "We heard a massive explosion ... and then the windows were blown out," a customer at the café said. "Everything landed on top of me," said another customer, who escaped with a slight head injury. Firemen continued to search through the rubble for two people reported missing.

U.S. planned to drop A-bombs on China in 1964

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — The United States was on the verge of launching a nuclear attack against China in 1964 to stop it from manufacturing atomic weapons, the Los Angeles Times reported Sunday. Even the former Soviet Union was consulted on the matter but showed little interest, according to the Times, which quotes from declassified documents found in the U.S. State Department. After drawing up the plans and even plotting covert action by the CIA, aides to then-President Lyndon Johnson concluded that the problem was not worth a military attack, according to the Times. China eventually carried out its first nuclear experiments in 1964.

'Clinton is unstable and has a defective brain'

ATLANTA, Georgia (AFP) — After months of silence, former U.S. presidential candidate Ross Perot blasted away at President Bill Clinton over the Monica Lewinsky sex scandal, saying he was "unstable" and "unfit to be president." Clinton had a "defective brain" and exhibits a lust for power similar to Adolph Hitler, Joseph Stalin and Saddam Hussein, Ross said here late Saturday. "Any man who would ... bring worldwide shame to his family and to a vulnerable young woman is unfit to be president of this nation," said Ross, as he addressed the national convention of the Reform Party, which he founded to support his unsuccessful 1992 presidential bid. The billionaire Perot, who also failed in a 1996 presidential bid, remains a wildcard on the U.S. political scene. He has said nothing in public on the Lewinsky case since it broke in January. The White House was measured in its response. "Statements like these validate the American people's decision not to entrust Ross Perot with leading the country," said deputy White House press secretary Joe Lockhart. In his speech Perot also referred to the phone sex Clinton reportedly had with Lewinsky. "These telephone conversations — I'm not talking about 'Hello, how are you? But that weird stuff' — anybody who's that fouled up shouldn't get within a mile of the nuclear button," Perot said. Reform Party members had a warm reception for Perot, even though they ousted him from party leadership years ago, charging that he was too authoritarian.

What's in a name? Adolf Hittler can tell you...

BONN (R) — Let's face it, if your surname happens to be Hittler and your parents christen you Adolf, life isn't going to be easy. But a retired Austrian truck driver was quoted in a German newspaper Sunday as saying he never changed his name out of respect for his mother and father. "I often thought my life would have been a lot easier if I had another name," 60-year-old Adolf Hittler told the Welt am Sonntag newspaper. "No one ever believed that my name is Adolf Hittler. I get anonymous calls in the middle of the night from people who say 'Heil Hitler' or 'We have someone here for the gas chamber'," he said. "But I never changed it because I am proud of my parents." Hittler was attending a conference "for people with infamous names" in Braunau, an Austrian town just across border from Germany and the birthplace of Nazi leader Adolf Hitler. He said the name once cost him a construction job at a dam project in Austria. An engineer asked the workers what their names were. "The first in line answered 'Tony Sailer', the same as the famous skier," Hittler said. "The next answered 'Andreas Hofer', the same name as the Austrian freedom fighter. The engineer was growing annoyed because he thought they were pulling his leg. "And when he got to me I tried to warn him about my name, but when I said 'I'm Adolf Hittler' he threw us all out." Hittler said his son had adopted his wife's surname. "I accepted that but it still hurt me a little bit," Hittler said.

TB killing lions like flies at Kruger wild game park

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) — Lions at Kruger National Park are dying of tuberculosis so widespread and severe that the entire population is at risk, the Sunday Times reported. Lions catch the incurable disease, to which they have no natural resistance, from infected buffalo, scientists said. It weakens and emaciates them, leading to death. "Lions are dying like flies" and every one could be dead within 10 years, Dr. Johan Krige, deputy director of the Department of Agriculture, was quoted as saying in Sunday's front-page article. Lions tested in the southern part of the 10,000-square-kilometre wild game park, located about four hours' drive from Johannesburg, showed an infection rate of 90 per cent. Scientists said most of those would die.

Glamour for a good cause — Celebrities (left to right) model Christy Turlington, singer K.D. Lang, actress Elizabeth Taylor and former basketball player Earvin 'Magic' Johnson appear on stage prior to the 'Different Together' fashion show, September 26 in Santa Monica. Funds raised from ticket sales at the show will benefit several non-profit organisations dedicated to HIV/AIDS research and care in Los Angeles (Reuters photo)

Slovak opposition, set for victory, in talks on forming government

BRATISLAVA (AFP) — Slovak opposition parties appeared set for victory Sunday as partial general election results gave them nearly 60 per cent of the vote — but much depends on coalition negotiations.

The four main opposition parties garnered a total of 57.9 per cent of ballots cast, against 27.14 per cent for nationalist premier Vladimir Meciar's Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS), according to incomplete results.

Mikulas Dzurioda, head of the main opposition Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK), said the main opposition parties would hold talks later Sunday on the post-electoral situation.

But it was unclear how easy it will be for them to form a government. The opposition, while united in their desire to oust Meciar, has in the past been dogged by splits.

Former president Michal Kovac whose five-year term ended in March gloated that the results "signal the end of the Meciar era" and clear the way for "fundamental political change".

Kovac said he would consider serving a new presidential term.

Meciar, who has led the small former Communist country for much of the six years since it split from the Czech Republic in 1993, has been widely criticised for flouting democratic precepts.

The European Union, which rejected early membership talks with Slovakia last year on political grounds — the only country in the region to be so rebuffed — is watching the elections closely.

The partial results, which gave opposition parties 93 seats in the 150-seat parliament, were in line with exit polls released after the end of voting Saturday. Polling had begun Friday.

Meciar's party has secured 43 seats, while its coalition partner in the former government, the Slovak National Party (SNS), has 14 seats, according to the provisional results.

Under Slovak election law the largest party would usually take the lead in forming a coalition government.

But analysts point out that Meciar appears to face almost insurmountable odds in forming a working coalition, even if he could persuade one of the four "opposition" parties to back him as well as the SNS.

They also pointed out however that he will not go easily, whatever the results of the elections, and could try various means to cling on to power.

According to partial results overnight, the Democratic Left (SDL) was in third place with 15.9 per cent ahead of the Hungarian Coalition party (SMK) credited with 9.2 per cent and the SNS with 8.8 per cent.

The sixth and last party to have passed the threshold of 5.0 per cent needed to get into parliament was the Party of Civic Understanding (SOP) with 8.6 per cent, according to the private Markiza TV station.

Both the ruling parties and the opposition have declared that the vote happened "in line with the law and democratically."

Foreign observers also confirmed the "free and democratic" nature of the balloting and noted a high participation rate. In the eastern region of Kosice, for example, almost 90 per cent of those registered actually voted.

The statements contradict foreign and domestic observers' fears the election would not be free and fair, and in particular the opposition's concern that Meciar's allies might manipulate the results.

Those fears were fuelled by Bratislava's failure to accredit domestic observers to monitor the ballots. State television had also been accused of blatant bias in favour of Meciar during the election campaign.

Cohen sees consensus on NATO's acting on Kosovo

SARAJEVO (AFP) — U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen told U.S. peacekeeping troops here Sunday there was a consensus within NATO that the alliance must act soon if Serb President Slobodan Milosevic does not back off in Kosovo.

But Cohen acknowledged that NATO members had not yet resolved whether a U.N. resolution passed last week provides a sufficient legal basis to launch air strikes. And he emphasised that the United States will not act alone.

"I've tried to made it very clear the United States is not going to act unilaterally. It's either NATO or there won't be any action," he said after lunching with U.S. troops at the headquarters of the NATO-led Stabilisation Force in Bosnia.

"There's been some talk about a coalition of the willing, but I believe it is NATO's responsibility to take action here (if) Milosevic doesn't stop what he's doing," Cohen said.

NATO Thursday set in motion final preparations for air strikes in Kosovo if Milosevic does not end attacks on civilians.

Cohen, who met informally in Portugal Thursday with alliance defence ministers, said: "We've tried to send a very strong signal."

"There was, I believe, a consensus reached at the ministerial ... that all of them are concerned that tough action has to be taken soon if he doesn't back off," he said.

Reiterating that the United States does not believe NATO requires a special U.N. mandate to act, Cohen said a U.N. resolution calling for an end to the fighting could serve as a mandate.

"That has not been accepted yet at this point, but most of the other countries are also concerned about too much delay taking place," he said.

Cohen, whose five-day trip to Europe has so far been dominated by the Kosovo issue, will take up the fine points on the situation in Bosnia when he meets later in the day with U.S. and European officials in Sarajevo.

He was scheduled to meet Carlos Westendorp, the top international civilian official, and officials from the U.N. and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which organised the elections.

The election of Nikola Poplasen as president of the Serb entity in Bosnia and the defeat of the U.S.-backed incumbent Biljana Plavsic in the Sept. 12-13 has confronted the west with a wild card.

NATO defence ministers, in their meeting Wednesday in Portugal, expressed hope that the 32,000 NATO-led peacekeeping force in Bosnia could still be scaled back when they meet in December.

But such an outcome is now appears far from certain at a time when NATO is facing the prospect of a second Balkan intervention in Kosovo.

U.S. conducts non-explosive N-tests in Nevada

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States conducted non-explosive nuclear tests in the desert of Nevada Saturday, a Department of Energy (DOE) spokesperson said.

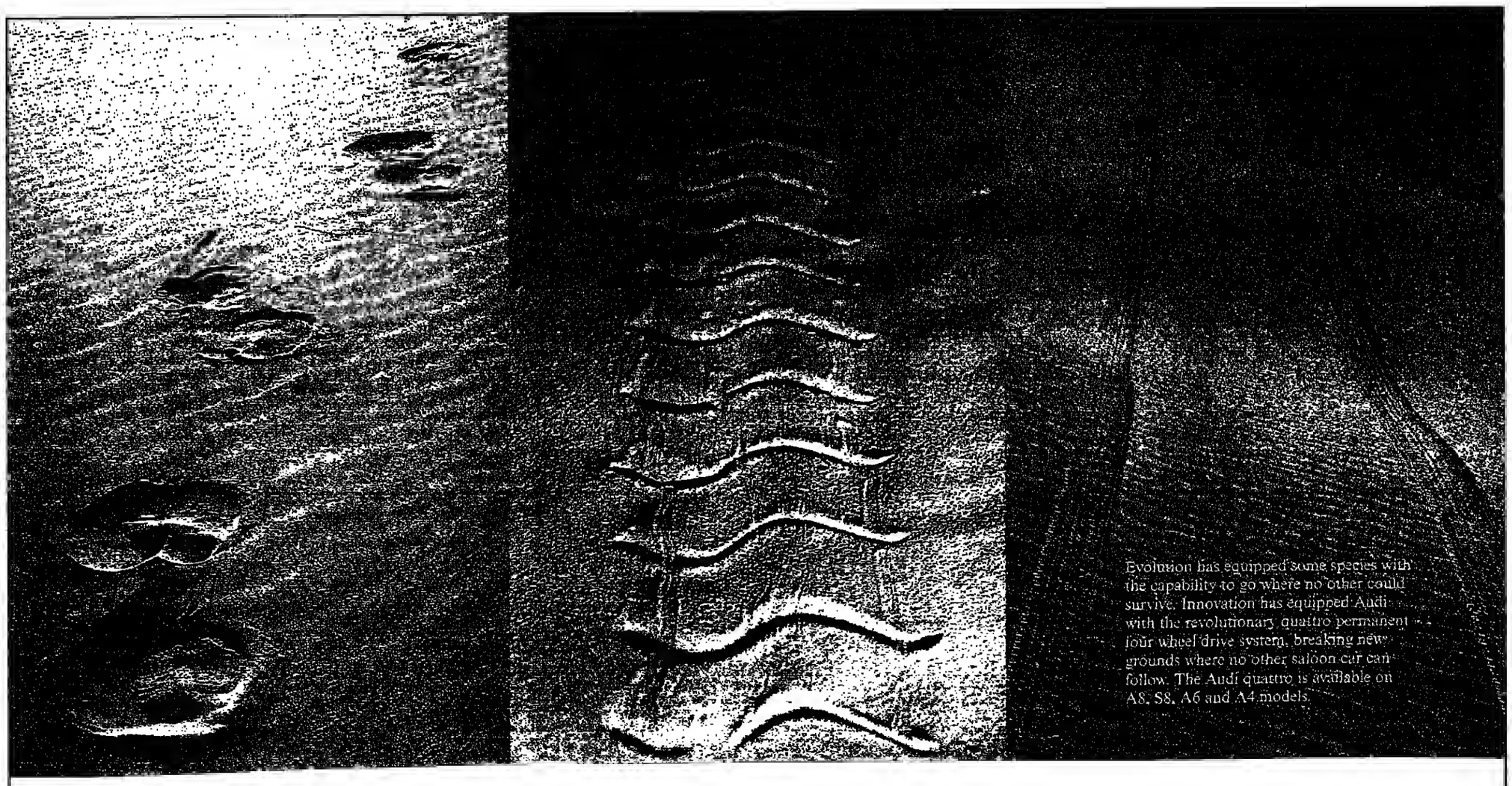
The test was a subcritical experiment designed to obtain data on the effects of ageing on material in nuclear weapons, DOE spokeswoman Brooke Anderson.

"The experiments are called 'subcritical' because no critical mass is formed, no self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction can occur and therefore no nuclear explosion can result," according to a written DOE statement on the test.

The goal of the experiments is to "maintain the safety and reliability of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile without nuclear testing, and (they) are fully consistent with the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty," according to the statement.

Energy Secretary Bill Richardson said in the statement that subcritical experiments "help ensure the safety and reliability of the stockpile without nuclear testing."

The experiment was conducted at an underground test site in Nevada 136 kilometres northwest of Las Vegas.



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Dealing with source of danger

DIFFERENT SOURCES from within and outside Israel are sounding the alarm these days about the state of health of Israel's Dimona nnclear plant. Over and above the *military* threat that Dimona poses to the security and stahility of the entire region, having prodnced hundreds of nnclear devices, the plant's old age and archaic systems of control pose a considerable threat to environment and the region's ecosystem sbould the facility experience a meltdown.

The location of Dimona close to Jordan's border puts the entire sonthern part of the country at great risk from any contamination that may emanate from the plant. While the Israeli anthorities insist that everything is just fine with Dimona, we in this conntry must not be so hlasé or satisfied with these assurances since our geographic proximity pnts us and our people at peril. The westerly wind factor exacerbates these dangers and should prompt us to be more alert than ever abont the imminent dangers of Dimona. Israel must have chosen the site of its nuclear facility carefully to lessen risks to its own population centres should a prohlem with the plant arise.

Bnt what adds insult to injury, meanwhile is Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu's statement before the U.N. General Assembly Thursday in whicb he called for a collective action against the threat being posed by the introduction of nnclear weapons and their means of delivery to the region. At a time when Israel bas just concluded testing its own long range missile after having stockpiled hundreds of nuclear weapons, it is crying wolf about the natural response of other states. Israel should recognise that its introduction of mass destruction weapons and their means of delivery have prompted other countries in the area to try to respond in kind. Only wben Israel agrees to make the Middle East free of all types of weapons of mass destruction, would there be an effective and permanent solution to the sources of dangers that Israel is complaining abont.

In this regard, it is disturhing to see the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) drop a draft resolution sponsored hy a number of Arah states inclnding Jordan that calls on Israel to accede to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and pnt its nuclear facilities under the supervision of the IAEA. It is bard to comprehend the reluctance of the agency to call on Israel to refrain from developing, producing, testing or possessing nuclear weapons. This is certainly not the kind of message the international community should be sending to Israel, the only state in the Middle East that is not a party to the NPT, at a time wben other countries in the region are snhjected to the most stringent controls over tbeir nuclear plants. This is precisely the kind of donble standard that we in this region have desperately been trying to point to.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahad Fanek said the ecooomic restructuring programme has achieved its declared aims, and the opposition to it lacks serious analysis and depends on ideological considerations. In an evaluation of the programme, he added that the plan did not achieve growth nor reduce unemployment and poverty, but it helped confront the foreign stock crisis, manage external debts and remove national economic confusion. The economic growth average, which was 5.7 per cent for the past six years, is good on any scale, the writer added. This, Fanek said, was a result of many factors besides the programme. Jordan's economy created 280,000 job opportunities even though the poverty line was extended to 24 per cent during the plan's period, the writer said. Before the programme, economic growth was fake, because it depended on government spending funded by Arab support and foreign loans, thus, real growth in the eighties was negative, Fanek claimed.

Al Dustour's Araih Rentawi warned against increasing charges for higher education in order to solve the unemployment problem. This will reduce the demand on such educatioo, restrict it to wealthy people and increase social contrasts, the writer said. In order to develop the economy, the government should solve the unemployment problem by organising labour markets and setting up new educational policies, Rentawi added. These solutions were reviewed by Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh at a press conference oo Saturday, but it takes courage to implement these solutions, added the writer.

Monday's Economic Review

Dr. Yusuf Mansur

The four Ds of Jordanian tourism

WHILE ECONOMISTS usually disagree just about everything — some economists even disagree with this claim — no two economists would disagree that tourism in Jordan is vulnerable to regional events. In fact, Jordanian tourism, as the events of the last two years have shown, is extremely susceptible to regional dilemmas, which are due in part to the lack of a clear distinction betweeo Jordan and the region among tourists. Can this situation be improved? The answer is the affirmative; however, the looming question remains whether Jordan can afford the price.

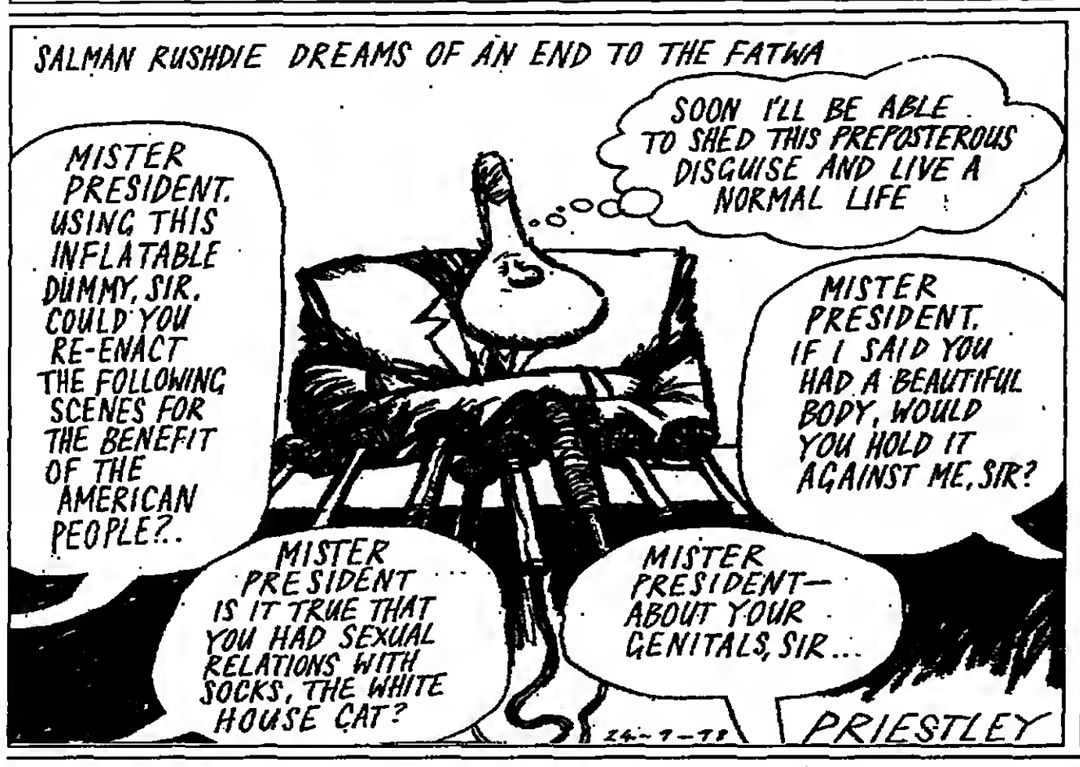
Gulf Arabs were said to have rescued Jordan's tourism (Jordan Times, August 29, 1998) this summer as spring cancellations by Western tourists, in response to the possible escalation of a crisis between Iraq and the U.N., threatened to dampen Jordan's tourism season at a time wheo a good season was badly needed in order to boost the economy. So far in 1998, Arab tourists accounted for 52 per cent of tourists and 62 per cent of tourism revenues with 444,000 Arab tourists visiting the Kingdom in the first seven months of this year (a 36 per cent increase over the same period last year), thus compensating for the 15 year drop in European and U.S. tourist arrivals, which dwindled to 188,000 for the same period. And had it not beeo for the water crisis which caused many Arab tourists to cancel their reservations and switch to other Arab countries, the revenues would have beeo even higher.

However, tourism from the Gulf countries may have been caused — in addition to the usual overused enunciation — by the fact that to many of these countries Jordan offers the only available ground route to the resorts of Lebanon and Syria. Therefore, their stay in Jordan is relatively brief since it is not their final destination. Furthermore, the drop in oil prices and the fall in the average incomes of the states and people and people of the Gulf may have caused the upsurge in inter-Arab tourism, as many were unable to head to the more expensive destinations in the West or the Far East, and hence the rise in the number of Arab tourists visiting Jordan — a clear demonstration of the derived demand paradigm.

One reason that Gulf Arabs did not cancel their bookings in Jordan was because it was clear in their minds that Jordan is unique and different from other countries in the region. This clear distinction is not available to Western tourists whose view of Jordan is coloured by every regiooal act. For example, wheo the tourism massacre occurred in Egypt last year, their tourism suffered. Jordan, which should have been considered a substitute destination by Western tourists, also suffered as people failed to distinguish it from Egypt and the rest of the Middle East. Egypt, through an aggressive campaign comprised of promotional offers and tremendous discounts, was able to recoup its losses and bring back the tourists. Jordan on the other hand with a promotional budget of $2 million could not have done the same — it simply lost tourists. Other events such as bombings in Israel have also had an adverse effect on tourism in Jordan, because Jordan, the closest alternative to Israel, did not have sufficient marketing funds to distinguish itself from the rest of the region.

The importance of creating a clear profile of Jordan in the tourism arena should oot be undermined. All countries are poteotial competitors and therefore should only be viewed as partners at the micro level — between enterprises. The macro policy, on the other hand, should be clearly competitive. The effective positioning of any product — Jordanian tourism in this case — requires that the four basic marketing tasks, known as the Four Ds, be implemented. Jordan must first be convincingly defined (first D) to the consumers of tourism around the world. At the same time it must be differentiated (second D) from the tourism products of other countries in a way that is not only meaningful but also institutionally sustainable. Next, tourists' understanding of the benefits of Jordanian tourism must be deepened (third D) and made apparent through the enhancement of the tourists' pleasures while in Jordan and by continued support after the trip to Jordan is completed. Finally, the image created of Jordan as a safe and pleasant culturally and historically rich experience must be defended (fourth D) over time.

Recently, a rumour that started in Israel claimed that someone in the tourism ministry there contacted Rome asking the Papacy about how many pilgrims are expected to visit Israel during the year 2000. The Vatican was supposed to have informed Israel that 20 million pilgrims are expected to visit the Holy Land in 2000 to celebrate the end of the millennia which some believe would also be the end of world. This rumour has helped substantiate and trigger other rumours and expectations about tourism levels in the year 2000. The billions of dollars that are expected to pour into the tourism industry between now and the year 2000 are in need of some form of protection from the usual regional hazards. The four Ds must come into play immediately. The budget allocated for tourism promotion must be expanded commensurably and immediately. If it is the end of time, let's not wait too long!



LETTERS

Behind the curtain

To the editor:

WHAT IS going on in Washington D.C. these days? The debacle President Bill Clinton has gotten himself into belies the notion that the United States' system of democracy is rational and those who are practising it are rational too. Bipartisan politics is superseding the fact that this fiasco must end and very soon.

No, taking revenge is more important for those congressmen than getting along with the usual business of government. But does that mean that these lawmakers are behaving like mischievous children? Not really. I think we have took look into the assumption that there are people and/or big conglomerates and/or religious organisations behind the curtains who are out to get the president. In other words, the congressmen are their hatchet men. These shady characters are so angry and piqued with the stands and beliefs of this president that nothing, even ruining the political system to their advantage, will satisfy their desire to get him out of office. It this was not so, then why are members of Congress so keen on neglecting the fact that a big majority of the American people want to end this debacle and keep the president in office.

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The Israeli commonwealth

By Zvi Bar'el

THERE IS a real threat to the Israeli empire: The Palestinian people plan to become a nation, to declare national sovereignty, free themselves from Israeli governments and thus turn Israel into the occupier of a foreign state. What happened to Portugal, Holland, the Ottoman Empire, Great Britain and the Soviet Union will happen to Israel too. We are lucky, however, because Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu thinks he has a magic spell that will avert the threat of a Palestinian state. He warns that if the state is declared not only will the diplomatic process be harmed, but he will also annex the West Bank to Israel. Thus, while the electronic billboard at the U.N. lights up with the names of the countries that support the creation of a Palestinian state, Netanyahu can read out loud the names of the Palestinian towns and villages whose citizens will now be eligible for Israeli National Insurance.

Arafat does not hide his intention to declare a Palestinian state and has even set a date, May 4, 1999 — exactly five years after the signing of the agreement in Cairo to withdraw from Gaza and Jericho. Seeing as Israel shows no signs of any intention to honour the Oslo agreements, there is just enough time to see whether Israel really plans to anoex the territories or if it is just bluffing.

Without a douht, such annexation means war with the independent Palestinian state, which will be backed this time not only by stone-throwing youths and policemen with submachine guns, but with international support that might not be as hroad as the Palestinians expect, but will include enough countries, including those considered friends of Israël: France, possibly Britain, Italy, maybe Germany, Russia, possibly Holland, Jordan and Egypt. The Palestinians, like Israel in the past, do not need all of Palestine to declare a state.

Land that they won't get as part of the agreement, including those slated for further withdrawals, will become, like with us, an object of their desires that will be realised when history so wishes. Until then, war can be maintained with Israel and its enclaves in the territories while keeping a nearly normal life as an independent state. Israel did it, Lebanon is successfully doing it now, and even blockaded Iraq has not yet collapsed.

Independent Palestine, even with minimal territory, will be able to invite whatever multinational forces it wishes, to place observers, get a full seat in the U.N. and to initiate resolutions that will win support from most countries in the world, including resolutions about the new state's borders. The word terror would be replaced by something nicer, like a war of independence, and the Israeli Four Mothers peace movement will become a movement of a thousand mothers.

The truth is that even if Israel fulfils every item in the Oslo agreement a Palestinian state would come into being in any case. This would be the first case in which a peace agreement pre-dated the creation of the state that is a signatory to the treaty.

But the Israeli governmeot sees such a developmeot as a figment of the imagination.

Relying as it does on its own history, the government knows that a pre-condition for peace is war, and every act of independence is preceded by a war of independeoce. Israel, according to Netanyahu, is stronger than the Soviet Union was and won't allow its national groupings to set up their own states without a good fight.

According to this line of thought, if the Palestinians want a state we will have to conquer them and wage, as is the custom, a good war of independence. Only then can one sign a peace treaty.

It can be assumed, or maybe just hoped, that this logic does not really drive Netanyahu, and that all the talk about annexation is just a bluff.

Thus, instead of an empty spell, we had better get ready for the creation of a Palestinian state and sign every possible agreement with its leaders so that it will remain part of the small Israeli commonwealth. The prime minister could also fulfil the Oslo agreement now, under relatively easy conditions for Israel.

But it woo't be a disaster if this happens in negotiations between states. After all, Israel always wanted to deal with an authoritative counterpart, a state for example, and not an organisation of an authority. This opportunity will start in May.

— *Ha'aretz*

Letter from Scotland

Peter Hinchcliffe is a former British ambassador to Jordan.

IT IS difficult for an observer of Middle Eastern events to follow developments in the British press at the moment. Indeed it has been hard going for some time because of the almost total preoccupation of the media with the sexual adventures of President Clinton. As usual what news there has beeo is negative. Bombing of chemical plants in Sudan, reports that Saddam Hussein has nuclear weapons hidden away, the increased threat to American interests from Ben Laden and continued stalemate in the peace process — slightly.

King Hussein's treatment for lymphoma has been given sympathetic and generally upbeat coverage in our newspapers. He remains a respected figure in even usually disrespectful British tabloids. He is well liked in Scotland where he used to spend some time visiting old friends — Scots who have lived and worked in Jordan — usually with the armed forces. He ooce told a Scottish newspaper that he regarded this country as his second home which, as you can imagine, went down very well particularly with the more nationalistic Scots!

Nationalism is becoming something of an issue here. Last year Scots voted in a referendum by a comfortable majority to opt for a wide measure of devolution. This will include a Scottish Parliament with very wide powers including the authority to vary taxation by up to 3 pence. A prospect known locally as "The Tartan Tax" — Tartan being the pattern on the traditional Scottish Kilt. Scots are traditionally careful with their money ("careful" according to the English really should be translated as "mean" — "bakhil" in this context). So everyone hopes that any 3p tax adjustment will be a cut not an increase. But that is purely wishful thinking. Most people expect that in fact an increased level of expenditure on social services (as promised by all local political parties) will mean that any change in the tax structure will be in the wrong direction. But this prospect does not seem to have dampened the enthusiasm of the supporters of a Scottish Parliament, which will start sitting next year.

Devolution will give Scotland many of the powers enjoyed by the PNA in that part of the West Bank it now controls. But as with the Palestinians it seems that a majority of Scots would like to go further and have full independence. Thus cutting the constitutional ties with England and opting out of the United Kingdom. Not a sentiment shared by most people neither in the Province of Northern Ireland nor in the Principality of Wales. Currently the Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) touting a policy of full independence has a commanding lead in opinion polls over the Labour Party with the Conservatives nowhere. Indeed in the general election last year the Conservatives lost all their parliamentary seats in Scotland. If the SNP wins a majority of seats in the new Scottish Assembly next year independence could start looking like a serious possibility; somewhat akin to the position of Quebec in modern Canada.

One can easily understand Palestinian aspirations to become a sovereign nation. Scotland is a bit different. Unlike Northern Ireland or even Wales she has always been recognisably a "country" or "nation." She has never been demoted to a province or principality. The Act of Union of 1707 was intended to unite both countries under one crown and one parliament. Theoretically a union of equals. But to Scottish nationalists it is an English crown and a parliament in London, which despite having Scottish MPs, is felt to be more concerned with English affairs at the expense of Scottish interests. Many Scots also feel that North Sea oil should be "Scottish" oil and used only for the benefit of those people living in its vicinity. Ironically the Shetland and Orkney islanders from whose waters most of the oil comes from voted strongly against a Scottish Parliament. They prefer London rule to control from Edinburgh.

We live in the Borders — fought over by Scottish and English armies (or, more accurately, groups of brigands pretending to be armies and selling themselves to the highest bidder). Berwick-upon-Tweed our nearest town of any size changed ownership as between England and Scotland 8 times in the 14th and 15th centuries. It is now English and the walls built by Queen Elizabeth I remain intact and unchallenged since the day they were built. The Borderers — those inside Scotland — only narrowly voted for devolution. Despite their bloody history they know and like their English neighbours and like the East and West Bankers are heavily intermarried into them. They look south commercially and do more business in England than in Scotland. Moreover they are no longer paid by greedy and unscrupulous leaders to raid and plunder into England. So quite sensibly they have stopped. This is quite in character. The Scots were winning a famous battle in 1514 against the English when the Borderers left the Scottish "team" (more or less at half time) as they felt that they had won enough booty for the time being. This being a good third of the Scottish army the English rather unexpectedly ran out victors. Not a story often told by Scottish nationalists nor one as yet immortalised by Hollywood.

Anyhow nationalist or not every Scot would want to wish His Majesty a speedy and complete recovery. As do I.

Two intriguing, very different sites among the many ancient remains in Ghor es-Safi region

By Rami G. Khouri

(Note: This is the eighth in a series of recent articles on the antiquities of the Southern Ghors region, along the south-east coast of the Dead Sea.)

TWO OF the most fascinating ancieot sites in the Ghor es-Safi region are about as different in scale and purpose as is possible to imagine — a massive hilltop fortress or walled town from the Nabatean/Roman period, and a small chapel-cave or hermitage facility perched delicately on a hillside overlooking the valley floor. Neither are marked or particularly well protected. The large fortress is the easier of the two to visit by those prepared to do some hardy walking.

About one kilometre east of Safi township (as the crow flies) is the large site of Umm et-Tawabeen ("mother of bread ovens," in Arabic). The name reflects the numerous circular stone structures inside its walls that look like bread ovens. The site is not easy to ideotify from the road or the valley floor, but only becomes clear as you walk up to it. It occupies the summit of a steep hill immediately south of where the Wadi Hasa gorge enters the Gbor es-Safi floor.

It can be reached by a steep, 20-minute hike from the south bank of Wadi Hasa.

The site was also called Khirbet Labrush and El-Ebrosh by early travellers who visited it during the past century, such as Kitchener in the 19th Century and Mallon early this century. The Canadian scholar Burton MacDonald examined it in 1986 during his survey of the Southern Ghors and oorth-east Wadi Arabah, and he identified it as a Nabatean-Roman fortress or walled settlement. The entire site is surrounded by a stone wall built mostly oo a natural rock ledge, and extending for about 2.5 kilometres around the entire hilltop site. Several courses of stones in the wall are still standing, and what appears to be a city gate is also clear when viewed from the summit. A citadel-like structure crowns the summit, which offers a commanding view of the entire region at the south end of the Dead Sea — including the sharp rise from the Southern Ghors up onto the Wadi Arabah escarpment. Remnants of several thick lateral walls and large built structures are visible inside the wall. Two reservoirs are also clear, one near the citadel and another just inside the west side of the wall. A large tumbled structure at the south end of the site, where its long east and west walls meet, may have been a tower. Located both inside and outside the settlement's wall are over 100 stone-built circular structures each measuring 2-3 metres in diameter, with 'entrances' to the east. Their purpose is not clear, though they have been interpreted as bases for tents or perhaps even as remains of ovens. The pottery collected from all areas of the walled site is predominantly Nabatean, dating from the last decades of the 1st century B.C. to the mid-2nd century AD, including some distinctive painted Nabatean wares. The site also has some late Chalcolithic/Early Bronze, late Roman and early Byzantine sbards; this suggests that it was occupied before and after the Roman annexation of the Nabatean kingdom in 106 AD.

One of the two caves at the Hasa chapel or hermitage, with the carved apse flanked by two niches still well preserved *(Photo by Rami G. Khouri)*

Dr. MacDonald's survey of the Wadi Hasa identified a series of fortified settlements and watchtowers that seem to have protected the routes along the Wadi Hasa, connecting the Jordanian plateau near the present day town of Hasa and the Southern Ghors (especially the Gbors Safi and Feifeh). The Wadi Hasa survey discovered a similar large walled settlement from the Nabatean-Early Roman period, located higher up in the hills towards the plateau. Called Umm Ubtulah by the local seminomadic residents of that area (about half way between the Desert Highway and the King's Highway), that other site seems to have been part of the military monitoring zone whose westernmost outpost was probably Umm et-Tawabeen. The spectacular panoramic view from the summit of Umm et-Tawabeen certainly lends credence to its role as a military monitoring and signalling post in Nabatean-Roman days. Umm Ubtulah also had Early Bronze Age pottery remains, though there is no indication of any connections between the two sites in this period (around 3300-2000 BC).

Wadi Hasa Hermitage

Opposite Umm et-Tawabeen, on the north bank of the Wadi Hasa, is another fascinating ancieot site whose precise purpose is also unclear. This site, called the Wadi Hasa Hermitage for lack of a better name, comprises the remains of two man-made caves from the Byzantine period. The caves are perched about 50 metres above the Hasa riverbed and 100 metres noth of it.

The caves were first ideotified in 1934 by the German scholar Fritz Frank, who thought they were a hermitage and chapel. West of the caves, Frank also noted a cistern protected by a high wall, and he picked up some Byzantine pottery.

Burton MacDonald and David Graf visited the site in May 1980 and collected more Byzantine pottery dating from the 5th-6th centuries AD.

Dr. Herbert Donner of West Germany revisited the site in the 1980s and tried to determine its precise use. He also wanted to explore whether it could be associated with the Church of St. Lot that is depicted in the 6th century AD Madaba mosaic map of Palestine — but that associaiion seems unlikely, now that the Church and Monastery of St. Lot have been discovered and excavated slightly to the north, in the area known locally as Deir 'Ain Abata. (The last time that Lot, Abraham's nephew, is mentioned in the Bible is in Genesis 19, when he reportedly stayed in a cave with his two daughters somewhere in this area. Fearing they were the last people alive after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, they are said to have gotten him drunk and slept with him, subsequeotly giving birth to Moab and Ammon. A church built on the spot of the cave in the Byzantine period to commemorate this event was later represented in the Madaba mosaic, alongside the biblical city of Zoar, called "Balak, also (Segor, now) Zoora." Segor or Zoora was the name of the Byzantine town at Safi. Just above (east of) Zoar, the Madaba map shows a church with the inscription "The Sanctuary of St. L (ot)").

The city of Zoar is firmly ideotified with the nearby site of Tawahin es-Sukkar/Khirbet Sheikh 'Issa. The chapel-cave is located about a kilometre east of Tawahin es-Sukkar, precisely where the Wadi Hasa gorge eoters Ghor es-Safi. The caves are not easily accessible today, though there are traces of steps that were probably part of the ancient passageway leading up to them.

The north cave is partially destroyed and filled in, and has cut into it a typical Byzantine tomb covered with 1.1-metre-long stone slabs. Four slabs are still in the cave. A door in the south wall of the cave leads into the south cave, whicb Donner viewed as a chapel. In its east wall, facing the main entrance, is a one-metre wide apse flanked by two smaller, half-metre wide niches. The walls of the south cave were plastered and painted in antiquity, and some traces of painted geometric designs can still be seen in the apse. To the right of the door connecting the two caves is a badly preserved Greek inscription that reads: " + O Lord, God of this Holy Place help (? or: be gracious to?) the servant of thine PN".

The inscription dates from the late Byzantine period (6th/7th centuries AD), and its reference to a "holy place" at that time usually meant a place mentioned in the Bible, or where a biblical event occurred. It is possible that the facility was somehow built there because of the association of the area with the story of St. Lot, as no other biblical event is thought to have taken place there. Outside the caves is a 2.2 x 3.5 metre cistern; on its south side is a large, well preserved wall over half a metre thick and seven metres long, still standing over six metres high in places. It is made of two rows of stones filled in with rubble. The stones are oot well cut, but are neatly arranged.

Frank suggested the wall served simply to protect the cistern, but other scholars have seen it as part of a substructure that would have been required to support a church or other building. Such support would be necessary for building on the rather weak Nubian sandstone earth of the area, which erodes easily. Extending up the hill are traces of another wall that may have helped to protect the building by preventing erosion damage.

The likelihood is that this was a small hermitage used by ascetic monks in the Byzantine period, when such facilities were common in this region. A slightly larger and more sophisticated hermitage has been identified at Wadi 'Afra, some 20 kilooetres to the east. That one comprised three inter-connected caves with sculptured arches, columns, niches and alcoves, and decorated with paintings and Christian symbols.

Dr. Burton MacDonald, who documented Umm et-Tawabeen, walks on the summit of the hilltop site amidst ruins of some of the circular structures, with the settlement fortification wall extending towards the north (top-right of photo); the plain of Ghor es-Safi and the Dead Sea coast are visible towards the top-left of photo *(photo by Rami G. Khouri)*

Schroeder wins German elections, ending Kohl era

(Continued from page 1)

conference in Bonn.

Kohl said he had a "very clear responsibility" in the defeat of his Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and was quitting as its chairman after 25 years at the head of the party.

He hailed the oppositioo win as a "personal success" for Schroeder.

The election, the third national vote since German reunification in 1990, was of key historical importance, partly because the incoming parliament will move to Berlin next year.

It was also a judgement on Kohl. He oversaw reunificatioo and anchored his country to the European Union and its single currency, which will replace the mighty mark, but failed to deliverd oo promises of economic prosperity.

Schroeder told ZDF television that work on a coalition would start "tomorrow [Mooday], in quiet."

"I can repeat that I will not lead a government backed by the PDS," the former East German communists in the Party of Democratic Socialism, he pledged.

Television estimates said Sunday evening that a red-green coalition of the SPD and Greens would have a majority of four to five seats in the lower house of parliament, the Bundestag.

In the crucial results of small parties, which will determine what sort of ruling coalition is formed, the leftist Greens had 6.7 per cent of the vote, the liberal Free Democrats (FDP) 6.2 per cent and the PDS 5.0, according the television projections.

In 1994, the CDU/CSU had 41.4 per ceot of the vote to 36.4 for the SPD, with 7.3 for the Greens, 6.9 for the FDP and 4.4 for the PDS.

Turnout was high Sunday, at 4:00 p.m. local time running at 61 per ceot, compared with 59 per cent at the same point in the previous legislative elections in 1994.

Some 60.5 million Germans could vote for the Bundestag this time around.

Senate panel gives failing grades to economic reform programme

(Continued from page 1)

$6.5 billion foreign debt, has been 2.2 per cent in the negative in 1997, the statement said.

"During the first seven months of this year exports declined by 6.5 per cent."

Jordan's sluggish economy should not be blamed on lack of investment in capital creation — which stood at 30 per cent of the GDP between 1990 and 1997 — but on low productivity of these investments, the statement said.

While national savings' contribution to investment increased from 4.5 per cent in 1992 to 36 per cent in 1995, it decreased by 18.5 per cent in 1996 and 1997, the statement noted.

At a press conference on Sunday, Kamal Sha'er, head of the committee, said for the government to reduce its budget deficit which is expected to reach 8-8.5 per cent in 1998, it should increase revenues and reduce public spending.

"But the government should not reduce capital expenditure in the form of investments that would contribute to future economic growth," Sha'er warned.

The committee also called on the government to reconsider the whole educational process and channel educational and training programmes towards meeting the real market needs as well as increasing national productivity — a promise made by Tarawneh in his policy statement to the Lower House of Parliament last week.

The committee urged the government to develop extensive and non-traditional methods by introducing short, medium and long-term programmes that run parallel to each other with specialised foreign experts to plan and implement them.

The committee noted the need to reform the bureaucracy which it accused of "hindering productive activity by Jordanian or non-Jordanian business people."

The members expressed satisfaction, however, that the government inteods to convince Israel to open the Palestinian market to Jordanian products.

They said they also satisfied with the government declaration that it will pay its dues to the private and public sectors and urged it to do that through the issuance of treasury bonds.

The committee includes in addition to Sha'er, former prime minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, former minister Khaled Haj Hassan, former advisor to His Majesty King Hussein Mohammad Rasoul Kilani, former minister and banker Rajai Muasher, former minister and President of the Jordan Businessmen Association Hamdi Tabba'a, former planning minister Rima Khalaf and business woman Subbyyeh Ma'ani.

The meeting with the committee was attended by Minister of State for Development Affairs Taher Kana'an, Industry and Trade Minister Mohammad Saleh Hourani, Finance Minister Michel Marto, Planning Minister Nabil Ammari and Governor of the Central Bank of Jordan Ziad Fariz.

Albright meets with Arafat, Netanyahu separately

(Continued from page 1)

threat of declaring a Palestinian state that prompted the United States to make a major peace push this week.

Instead, he said the push reflects the more general U.S. concern "about the deterioration of the process, the lack of trust and confidence between the sides and the looming arrival of May 4 1999 when the [final peace] agreements were supposed to have been completed." "That's what gives us a sense of urgency. We certainly hope the two leaders have an equivalent sense of urgency so that they can make the tough choices," Rubin said.

The current phase marks a more intense direct involvement in the negotiations than Albright has taken in recent months when the United States left the two sides mainly to work out their differences on their own.

Albright and Arafat went immediately into one-on-one talks without aides, a sign of the secretary of state's determination to "help broker agreements that will make progress" between the Palestinian and Israelis, Rubin said.

Asked about Albright's optimism for achieving even that more limited goal, the spokesman said: "She told me in the car on the way over, she's given up trying to predict what telltale signs might yield in terms of success." "Clearly a lot of work has gone into this. But it's really going to be up to them [Netanyahu and Arafat] whether when push comes to shove in the coming days, they want to find some areas where they can lock in progress," he said.

Rubin and other officials claim there has been progress in the long-stalled peace talks in recent weeks.

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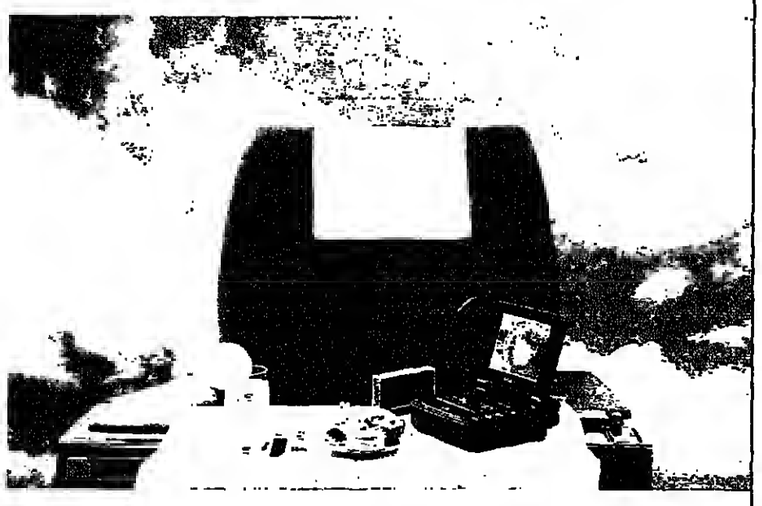

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Reflecting the Change

EU finance chiefs see bigger role in global crises

VIENNA (AFP) — European Union (EU) finance ministers headed home from Vienna Sunday, stressing that Europe must play a greater role on the world economic stage as it prepares to launch its single currency amid global financial turmoil.

The Asian and Russian crises have underlined that the EU must accept the responsibilities that go with the euro, set to become a key global currency when it is launched on Jan. 1, they said.

"We need a stronger European voice on the world economic stage," said Austrian Finance Minister Rudolf Edlinger, whose country currently holds the EU presidency.

For example "we are aware that Europe should play a stronger role in activating the reform of the International Monetary Fund," said European Monetary Affairs Commissioner Yves-Thibault de Silguy.

The 15 EU ministers had been meeting since Friday for their last such informal get-together before the euro's launch. Their formal talks ended Saturday night, but most stayed until Sunday.

Their deliberations were overshadowed by the fallout from the Russian and Asian crises, however. They are fully aware that the euro-zone offers an island of economic stability in the current world financial environment.

Although the direct impact of the turmoil to the east in terms of EU countries' trade patterns is limited, the back-door consequences of the crises are beginning to make themselves felt.

In particular, the recent sharp fall in the dollar — precipitated by the slide in world stock markets — is a major concern because of its negative impact on the exporting sectors which have led Europe's recovery over the last two years.

Apart from the crises, the key formal issue discussed was how to represent the euro in international fora such as the Group of Seven (G-7) leading industrialsed countries.

France proposed that the euro be represented on a rotating basis by the three euro-zone countries which are also in the G-7: France, Italy and Germany.

Bonn does not support the suggestion, and smaller euro-zone countries have other ideas.

De Silguy said talks on resolving the issue had been open and lively. "There was no frontal confrontation between the two sides ... We hope to reach a solution by the end of the year," he said.

European Commission President Jacques Santer called for EU unity in the face of the risk of global economic meltdown, saying Europe must not spend too much time on internal argument.

"We cannot be inward-looking. Faced with the crises, the time has come to unite our efforts," he told the ministers gathered in Vienna for their last informal meeting before the euro is launched at the start of 1999.

Above all de Silguy said there was no cause for alarm.

"There is no need to panic. Even though we are going through uncertain times, the European economy is well," he said.

On the sidelines of the Vienna meeting Greece and Denmark — two of the four EU countries not in the euro-zone — agreed to participate in an updated Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM II) linked to the euro.

New Zealand joins Asia's recession club

WELLINGTON (AFP) — New Zealand has joined a large part of Asia when official data showed its economy had sunk into recession, but Treasurer Bill Birch said it may already be on the recovery road.

Gross domestic product (GDP) shrank by 0.8 per cent in the June quarter, following a revised contraction of one per cent in the March quarter. It was originally reported as minus 0.9 per cent.

A recession is defined as two consecutive quarters of negative growth. The data had been widely expected to confirm that a drought and a weaker international economy had tipped the economy into recession.

New Zealand joined Japan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, South Korea, Thailand and Indonesia among recession casualties.

Opposition Labour Party finance spokesman Michael Cullen called for an early election after the data's release.

"After today's news, (Prime Minister Jenny) Shipley and her Treasurer Bill Birch must acknowledge that their economic management skills are abysmal," he said in a statement."They have presided over growing fiscal and current account deficits, a downgrade and now an economy in recession.'"

Chirac calls for global finance reforms

PARIS (R) — French President Jacques Chirac has urged leaders of the rich industrialised countries to rapidly reform the world's beleaguered financial system.

A day after U.S. central bank chief Alan Greenspan warned that the fallout from financial crises in emerging and other markets was threatening the U.S. economy, the world's biggest, Chirac presented radical new proposals, including an urgent revamp of the global monetary system.

In a letter to fellow leaders of the Group of Seven leading industrial countries and to the head of the European Commission, he said they should improve their ability to respond to financial crises.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) should remain at the centre of the system and that its funds needed to be increased urgently, he said.

He called for a "New Bretton Woods," after the international monetary system created in 1944 at a conference of 44 nations held at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, where the IMF and World Bank were created.

"The current financial crisis shows that we need a profound dialogue among us as well as a decision making mechanism that will give the markets strong political signals," he wrote.

"The transformation of the interim committee of the IMF in a decision-making body at ministerial level, for which its statutes open the possibility, will meet this objective," Chirac said.

Chirac said that off-shore financial centres should respect international rules and that the international liberalisation of capital movements should take place in a controlled fashion.

He said France was willing to host a summit to take the necessary decisions for the new system.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair, the current chairman of the Group of Seven Monday set five priorities for reform — more transparency in the world financial system, better supervision and regulation, a swifter response to liquidity crises, better handling of massive capital flows and more openness by the IMF.

REUTERS REUTERS
The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates — Prices as at 27/09/98 20:01

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.6800	0.5888	1.3882	136.00	1.5130	1682.80	1.8946	5.6260
DE Mark	0.5952	-	0.3500	0.8261	80.94	0.9001	989.17	1.1276	3.3482
GB Sterling	1.6985	2.8547	-	2.3579	231.09	2.5698	2824.27	3.2180	9.5558
CH Franc	0.7204	120.96	0.4237	-	97.96	1.0895	1197.38	136.43	4.0513
JP Yen	0.0074	1.2344	0.4323	1.0200	-	1.1117	12.22	139.21	4.1337
CA Dollar	0.6609	1.2855	0.4235	1.0438	1.11	-	1266.22	1.4489	4.3099
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0102	0.3538	0.0835	1223.84	0.9096	-	11.39	3.3830
NL Guilder	0.5278	88.65	0.3105	73.26	71.75	0.7984	877.42	-	2.9687
FR Franc	0.1777	0.2985	0.1046	24.6660	24.15	0.2688	33.66	33.6600	-

Middle Eastern Currencies

Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7090	3.7504	0.3770	3.6399	0.3037	3.6728	1511.00	3.4050
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	-	5.2897	0.5317	5.1339	0.4283	5.1803	2131.17	4.8025
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1890	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0810	0.98	402.89	0.9079
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8807	9.9485	-	9.66	0.8056	9.74	4008.17	9.0323
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0304	1.0304	-	0.0834	1.01	415.12	0.9355
Kuwait Dinar	3.2929	2.3347	12.3498	1.2414	11.99	-	12.09	4975.63	9.9355
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0211	0.1026	0.9910	0.0827	-	411.40	0.9271
Lebanese/1000	0.66	0.4692	2.4821	0.2495	2.4089	0.2010	2.4307	-	2.2535
Egyptian	0.2937	0.2082	1.1014	0.1107	1.0690	0.0892	1.0786	443.76	-

Energy

Oils	Last	revious
Brent	0.00	0.00
W. Texas	15.76	15.95
Bonny	0.00	0.00
Dubai	14.23	13.87
UL Gas	139.00	138.00

Mid-East Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4482	0.15998	0.37027	36.2897
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.45769	0.1603	0.3781	37.0563
KW Dinar	3.2929	5.53403	1.93874	4.57247	448.229
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.48831	1.56177	3.68324	361.011
CY Pound	2.0056	3.3694	1.1801	2.7842	272.762

Metal Prices

Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	294	294.5
Silver (oz's)	5.18	5.19
Platinum (oz's)	352	354
AL (3 Months)	1344	1347
CU (3 Months)	1666	1670
Zinc (3 Months)	996	1000
Lead (3 Months)	527	531
NI (3 Months)	4120	4150

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)

Period C'ncy	-1- Month	-3- Months	-6- Months	-1- Year
USD	5.3867	5.3125	5.2500	5.0625
GBP	7.4375	7.3789	7.2500	6.9375
JPY	0.4453	0.4414	0.4805	0.4805
DEM	3.4688	3.5000	3.5625	3.5820
FRF	3.5000	1.4648	1.6250	1.6875
CHF	1.3750	3.5313	3.5723	3.6016
ITL	4.9890	4.7990	4.3250	-

Energy

Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lbs)	104.33	Spot
Cocoa ($/ton)	1932	Spot
Sugar ($/ton)	213.1	Spot
Wheat ($/ton)	103	Spot
Soya (c/lbs)	24.98	Spot
Tea (stg/kg)	125	Spot
Barley ($/bsh)	0	Spot
Rice ($/ton)	415	Spot

*** JOD Cross Rates**

Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.2016	1.2076
DE Mark	0.4207	0.4228
CH Franc	0.5102	0.5128
FR Franc	0.1257	0.1263
JP Yen	0.5198	0.5224
NL Guilder	0.3731	0.375
IT Lira	0.4261	0.4282

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

Amman Marriott staff donate blood

THE AMMAN Marriott Hotel in cooperation with the National Blood Bank held its eighth blood donation campaign on Monday, September 21, 1998.

Many hotel employees were eagerly waiting their turn to donate blood and help the National Blood Bank in its campaign.

Ballet Classes

Haya Cultural Center would like to announce that admission for the Ballet, Gymnastic, Taekwando, Yoga and Music Courses for the Autumn term of 1998 will be open till September 30th 1998.

Also Haya Cultural Center would like to inform you of developing and expanding its Ballet and Gymnastic School which will be supervised by a professional Russian team.

For registration and more information, please contact Haya Cultural Center at 5665194/5

LUXURIOUS OFFICE FOR THE ELITE

If you are in search of a luxurious office in its location, its decoration, and its distinguished and luxurious furniture — with two telephone lines — and all other utilities, have the office you are looking for.

For the concerned call 5856485/6 or mobile: 07926540

Furnished Apartments For Rent

2 deluxe fully furnished apartments, 2, and 3 bedrooms (one master), with 2 sunny terraces, 2 bathrooms, modern kitchen, spacy dining and guest area. Central heating, telephone, colour TV, video and satellite, water reservoir. Safe and quiet residential area. No water problem.N.B.: One bedroom with the same qualities is also available.

Location - 3rd Circle, Jabal Amman, Near Al Khalidi Hospital, Hisham Hotel, and The French Embassy.

Call Dr. M.A.T. Kannan at 4632755 from 10:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. daily.

Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan joins the World Clean Up 98

IN KEEPING with Inter-Continental's worldwide commitment to the protection of the environment, Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan joined earth's largest community organised environmental event "The World Clean Up 98."

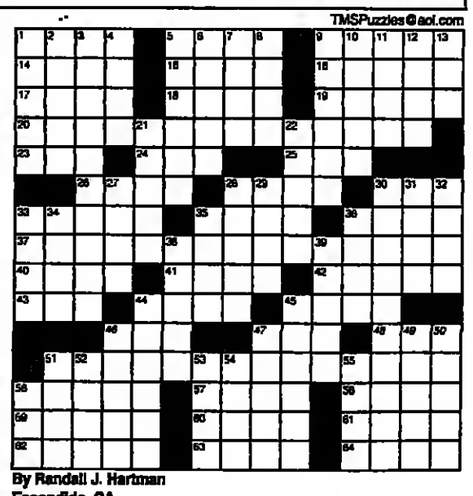
Hotel staff members participated in The World Clean Up day organised locally by the Jordan Environment Society, and cleaned the Naour suburb of Amman, roads leading to the Dead Sea and the area around factories situated along the main highway between Naour and the Dead Sea.

Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan joined hands with several community establishments, schools, universities and governmental bodies in a unified effort to draw the public's attention to the importance of preserving the environment.

THE Daily Crossword

Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



ACROSS
1 Tex-Mex order
5 Flops
9 Chilly coating
14 Astronaut Shepard
15 Incite
16 Lariat
17 Housecoat
18 "__ Lisa"
19 Pale
20 What the hockey player turned thief said?
23 Diego or Jose
24 Put in position
25 Vote against
26 Drop
28 Howard and Wood
30 Used chairs
33 "Aida" or "Carmen," e.g.
35 Lasso
36 Missile garage
37 What the cashier turned thief said?
40 Wine sediment
41 Butts
42 Borders
43 Blow it
44 Takes up post
45 Israel's airline
46 Swallow
47 In favor of
48 Twisting turn
51 What the manicurist turned thief said?
56 Capacitance unit
57 Yellow and Black
58 Theater award
59 Madonna role
60 Otherwise
61 Destiny
62 Untidy
63 Soaked in woad
64 Mr. Flintstone

DOWN
1 Small pies
2 Hilo hi
3 Result of being cooped up
4 Washington bills
5 Maiden
6 Ger. sub
7 Lions' lairs
8 RBI or ERA, e.g.
9 Brouhaha
10 Hazardous
11 Honolulu's island
12 Part of a process
13 Khaki shade
21 Shiite's belief
22 __ Hebrides
27 War god
28 Baths and kitchens
29 Musical piece
30 Pickup place
31 Shelterward
32 "__ in the Attic"
33 Eye covetously
34 Bridge support
35 Nolan of the diamond
36 Soft drink
38 Muse of lyric poetry
39 Cantaloupe, e.g.
44 Distress call
45 Wiped out
46 Les __ Unis
47 Temporary behavior
49 Connecting rooms
50 Swiftness
51 Do roadwork
52 "Trinity" author Leon
53 Manipulated
54 Depend
55 Take off one's hat
56 Opp. of masc.

By Randall J. Hartman
Escondido, CA

P	A	W	L		A	L	I	S		D	O	O	O	S
A	L	A	I		G	U	S	H		A	N	E	N	T
B	L	I	P		A	N	N	O		N	I	E	C	E
H	O	T	P	O	T	A	T	O		G	O	R	E	N
A	W	E	I	G	H			K	I	L	N			
				R	A	S	A		R	E	S	A	L	E
O	O	L	C	E		A	U	D	I		K	N	O	T
A	R	E	A		S	A	R	I	S		I	N	C	A
R	E	A	R		T	R	A	M		S	N	A	I	L
C	O	R	R	A	L		L	E	A	H				
			O	D	O	R			T	I	A	R	A	S
S	M	O	T	E		A	L	I	E	N	C	O	R	N
P	A	R	T	S		O	A	O	A		I	S	E	E
A	S	C	O	T		O	L	E	S		N	I	N	E
S	H	A	P	E		N	O	S	E		G	E	A	R

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Peanuts

Andy Capp

Mutt'n'Jeff

THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen

"Someone saw you hopping across the hot sand at the beach and they want you to audition for 'Lord of the Dance'."

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

MEZIA

CIDDE

HUCNAH

BOUSTE

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: THE "____" (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: SIEGE SLANT TRUSTY HIATUS
Answer: This made the hairdresser popular — SHEAR TALENT

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Trade deficit narrows by 5.9 per cent during first half of this year

**THE TRADE deficit has narrowed by 5.9 per cent during the first half of this year compared to the same period of last year, according to latest official figures about external trade. The deficit went down from JD812.1 million in the first six months of 1997 to JD763.9 million at the end of June 1998, the data showed.

Exports during the first six months of this year fell by 4.8 per cent to JD477.9 million from JD502.1 million posted during the same period of 1997. Re-exports also dropped by 4.2 per cent to JD103.2 million from JD107.8 million. The decline in imports was higher as they came down by 5.4 per cent to JD345.0 million from JD422.0 million.

Chemical products stood at the top of the export list as they amounted to JD153.2 million followed by minerals which totalled JD115.8 million compared to JD145.7 million and JD121.9 million respectively registered during the first half of last year. The exports of phosphate amounted to JD64.7 million (JD65.0 million) and those of potash amounted to JD42.0 million (JD44.2 million).

Foodstuffs and livestock exports totalled JD83.3 million followed by vegetables which reached JD46.3 million compared to JD88.9 million and JD32.9 million respectively during the first half of 1997. Other important exports included animal fat and oils but the amount was extremely low as it stood at JD21.5 million, down from JD51.8 million recorded during the first six months of 1997.

The figures showed that exports to Arab states fell from JD264 million during the first half of 1997 to JD215 million during the first half of this year. Saudi Arabia bought JD45.2 million (JD72.4 million in 1997), Iraqi purchases were down to JD48.0 million (JD65.9 million) and Syrian imports from Jordan were lower at JD6.9 million (JD10.1 million in 1997). Exports to Kuwait were less as they declined from JD15.3 million in 1997 to JD13.2 million while exports to Lebanon went up to JD21.7 million (JD19.8 million) and the United Arab Emirates to JD24.2 million (JD22.5 million).

Purchases by Qatar, Bahrain and Egypt during the first half of this year amounted to JD9.2 million, JD6.2 million and JD6.1 million respectively.

There was also a decline in exports to Europe as the total dropped from JD38.8 million in 1997 to JD33.5 million in 1998. The Asian markets bought less Jordanian products this year as the total was JD101.2 million compared to JD114.4 million during the first half of last year (Al Dustour).

Major firm collapses in Japan's largest post-war failure

TOKYO (AFP) — An affiliate of the troubled Long-Term Credit Bank of Japan Ltd. collapsed Sunday in Japan's largest post-war corporate failure, reports said.

Japan Leasing Corp. filed for bankruptcy with liabilities worth 2.4 trillion yen ($17.8 billion), Jiji Press said, adding to the growing list of victims to the collapse of the speculative investment boom of the late 1980s.

The company, saddled with bad loans, applied to the Tokyo District Court for protection under the corporate rehabilitation law, the Japan Broadcasting Corp. (NHK) and Fuji TV said.

The failure eclipses the 1.3 trillion yen in liabilities left by Crown Leasing Co. which went under in April last year along with two other leasing firms affiliated to Nippon Credit Bank Ltd.

A night duty official at the court could not confirm or deny the reports but said that it was technically possible for such an application to be filed late Sunday night. No one at Japan Leasing was immediately available to comment.

In a drastic reform plan announced last month, LTCB said it would bail out the three firms by writing off 520 billion yen in loans extended to them and pleaded for taxpayers' money to keep the bank afloat.

But on Friday the Japanese government said it would not finance the bank's offer of support to three of its struggling affiliates, including Japan Leasing Corp.

The imminent closure of Japan Leasing leaves the other two affiliates, Nippon Landic Co. and Nippon Enterprise Development Corp., vulnerable.

In addition, Japan Leasing has outstanding borrowings of about 1.9 trillion yen from domestic financial institutions which are certain to be hit hard by its failure, Jiji Press said.

LTCB, one of Japan's top 19 banks, virtually collapsed in June when its share price was ravaged on the stock market.

It was forced to ask another bank, Sumitomo Trust and Banking Co. Ltd., to absorb it in a rescue merger and then pleaded for taxpayers' money to shore up its capital.

The bank now lies at the heart of a stalled parliamentary debate over how to deal with Japan's banks and clean up their 87.5 trillion yen of bad loans.

After weeks of haggling over legislation to rescue the banking industry, the ruling and opposition parties agreed on Saturday to nationalise LTCB by making a forced purchase of its shares at a low price. The shares may then be sold to another bank.

The ruling Liberal Democratic Party had insisted that public money be used to increase the capital base of LTCB — set up in 1952 as a lender for big projects — before its proposed merger with Sumitomo Trust.

But the opposition and the financial markets consider LTCB all but insolvent due to its exposure to huge problem loans extended through numerous affiliates during the "bubble economy" investment boom.

Meanwhile, The head of the International Monetary Fund said Japan's new government needed to strengthen its banking reforms in light of the current global economic situation.

"We have to hope that Japan rapidly begins to strengthen its banking reforms and... its budgetary measures," Michel Camdessus told reporters.

Camdessus said he hoped Japan's new government would quickly show its leadership on those issues.

He said Japan's economic problems were most worrying because they came in the midst of the Asian economic crisis.

Japan's new government is facing an uphill battle trying to restore confidence in the economy.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHMEISANI
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 27/09/1998

	PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
S	355.500	170.000	ARAB BANK	17.9	.91	22	350	76650	219.75	219.00	.75-
↓	1.960	1.620	JOR.NATIONAL BK.	13.1	4.35	3	425	686	1.63	1.61	.02-
S	5.100	2.710	CAIRO AMMAN BANK	11.8	2.63	6	800	2250	2.71	2.85	.14+
S	2.680	1.550	INDUSTRIAL DEV.BK.	11.1	6.52	1	1500	2385	1.58	1.59	.01+
S	6.510	2.610	THE HOUSING BK.	18.4	3.45	28	9210	26692	2.92	2.90	.02-
S	3.450	1.760	JOR.KUWAIT BANK	.8	0.00	2	358	633	1.79	1.77	.02-
	.870	.560	JOR.GULF BANK	9	0.00	3	4650	2697	.57	.58	.01+
S	3.910	1.690	JOR.ISLAMIC BANK	18.1	0.00	11	4658	8197	1.73	1.77	.04+
	1.260	.930	UNION BK.SAV.INV.	P	0.00	3	550	523	1.00	.95	.05-
S	3.900	1.350	JOR.INV.FIN.BANK	22.8	3.38	2	2250	3330	1.48	1.48	-
	.970	.720	BEIT.AL-MAL (BEITNA)	3.5	0.00	2	280	201	.72	.72	-
	.850	.600	PHILADEL.INV.BK.	P	0.00	4	4850	3347	.69	.69	-
	BANK SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 287.26	%CHG: -0.38		87	29881	127590			
	2.850	1.760	JOR FRENCH INSUR.	7.3	9.58	2	300	771	2.62	2.61	.01-
	INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 126.27	%CHG: -0.05		2	300	771			
S	2.240	1.430	JOR.ELECTRIC PWR.	9.4	5.69	6	2950	4278	1.46	1.45	.01-
	4.030	1.650	IRBID ELECTRICITY	10.9	5.65	2	150	270	1.83	1.77	.06-
	5.200	3.550	ARAB INTL.HOTELS	18.9	3.26	2	2750	12640	4.50	4.60	.10+
	1.360	.740	NATL. PORTFOLIO	29.5	0.00	3	1650	1221	.74	.74	-
	1.120	.680	REAL ESTATE INV.	14.3	0.00	1	500	365	.73	.73	-
S	9.500	5.100	ALRA'I	8.4	7.27	1	50	275	5.60	5.50	.10-
S	4.600	1.880	ARAB INTL.INV.EDUC.	9.6	2.07	4	1502	2899	1.95	1.93	.02-
	1.000	.890	ZARKA EDUCATION	20.5	0.00	2	1800	1602	.89	.89	-
	1.830	1.060	UNIFIED CO.	5.1	9.57	24	8300	9505	1.12	1.15	.03+
	.810	.510	UNION LAND DEV.	9	0.00	4	2000	1020	.51	.51	-
	SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 106.42	%CHG: +0.25		49	21652	34073			
	3.880	1.840	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	11.3	5.79	5	1750	3325	1.90	1.90	-
	11.250	10.050	JOR. PETROL.REFINARY	10.2	8.45	13	667	6994	10.45	10.52	.07+
	1.650	1.060	INDUSTRIAL COMM.AGR.	67.4	0.00	3	400	456	1.13	1.14	.01+
	7.350	5.500	JOR.WORSTED MILLS	7.5	3.51	1	100	570	5.70	5.70	-
S	5.740	2.400	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	7.4	2.78	21	12309	33221	2.68	2.70	.02+
S	5.590	1.080	JOR.CERAMIC IND.	4.7	9.26	2	500	540	1.08	1.08	-
	1.440	1.020	JOR.PIPES MANFCT.	9.0	9.17	4	1161	1265	1.09	1.09	-
	.570	.390	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	13.2	0.00	10	11000	4290	.39	.39	-
	.800	.370	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	g	0.00	4	1900	817	.41	.43	.02+
	.590	.300	INTERMED.PETRO.CHEM.	g	0.00	11	12950	4017	.31	.32	.01+
	.690	.350	JOR. ROCKWOOL INDS.	g	0.00	3	1950	683	.35	.35	-
	.730	.380	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM	7.4	0.00	2	1250	490	.39	.39	-
	.700	.390	KAWTHER INVEST.	g	0.00	1	250	100	.41	.40	.01-
S	1.260	.530	UNIV. MODN.INDS.	10.5	9.09	10	6800	4498	.66	.66	-
	.920	.480	JOR.INDS.RESOURCES	g	0.00	5	1950	995	.50	.51	.01+
	1.580	1.200	NATL. CHLORINE	8.7	8.06	4	1250	1550	1.24	1.24	-
	1.080	.600	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	9.0	15.63	6	9800	6418	.64	.64	-
	1.560	1.150	EL -ZAY READY WEAR	44.0	0.00	2	91	113	1.26	1.25	.01-
S	1.310	.910	INTL. TOBACCO	7.3	5.61	28	105910	109117	1.03	1.04	.01+
S	1.220	.860	UNION CH. & VEG.	10.0	0.00	1	200	182	.93	.91	.02-
	.730	.580	NAT.ALUMINIUM.	34.2	0.00	20	32452	22125	.68	.69	.01+
	.670	.530	MID.EAST COMPLEX	10.0	0.00	3	2900	1568	.54	.55	.01+
	INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 77.86	%CHG: +0.15		160	207545	203335			
	GRAND TOTAL		INDEX: 172.69	%CHG: -0.22		298	259378	365769			

PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 27/09/1998

N	1.050	.860	EXPORT & FIN.BNK.75%	16.1	0.00	5	10200	6324	.87	.87	-
↓N	.950	.850	AMMAN INSURANCE	E	0.00	3	20500	17405	.85	.81	.04-
	.490	.270	CENTRAL GEN.STORAGE	g	0.00	1	500	150	.30	.30	-
	1.340	1.000	ZARA FOR INVESTMENT	72.2	0.00	1	302000	332200	1.05	1.10	.05+
	.800	.500	UNION INV.	g	0.00	4	3308	1756	.53	.54	.01+
	.620	.240	ARAB FIN.INVEST.	g	0.00	3	3700	925	.25	.25	-
N	2.220	1.050	CENTURY INV. GROUP	g	0.00	2	500	575	1.20	1.14	.06-
	.260	.090	JOR.INDS.MATCH-JEMCO	g	0.00	3	5500	770	.15	.14	.01-
	.600	.270	ARAB FOOD & MED.	g	0.00	5	2250	699	.30	.31	.01+
	.430	.230	ARAB INTL.INV.TRD.	26.5	0.00	22	37350	8596	.23	.23	-
	.580	.260	NATL.MULT.ENG.NAMICO	g	0.00	22	42000	11340	.27	.27	-
↓	.690	.570	MIDEAST PHARM. 90%	E	0.00	2	2250	1038	.57	.56	.01-
	2.160	1.160	UNION TOBACCO 87.5%	13.5	5.90	2	256	510	2.12	2.12	-
	.350	.190	INDS. ENG.	g	0.00	1	1000	210	.21	.21	-
	.690	.350	INDS. CERAMIC	9.2	0.00	8	3500	1225	.35	.35	-
N	.950	.540	ADVANCED PHARMA.IND.	g	0.00	2	200	113	.57	.57	-
	.660	.430	NATL. POULTRY	g	0.00	4	25250	12878	.51	.51	-
N	.950	.320	OPTICALS HEARING CO.	P	0.00	4	3650	1309	.34	.34	-
N	1.310	.760	NUTRIDAR	P	0.00	4	3550	2847	.80	.81	.01+
	GRAND TOTAL					98	467664	400868			

↓ : New 12 months low
B : Stock dividend during the past 12 months
N : Listed during the past 12 months
P : P/E ratio is 100 or more
g : Negative P/E
E : Earning is zero or N/A for the most recent year

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Opportunity knocks today. Could be the chance for a promotion or raise, or even a better job. Your experience will be useful now. You might even talk to your boss, or a person you'd like to have as your boss. There's something you know how to do that this person needs. Find out what it is, and offer your services.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Something that was not going well yesterday could get straightened out with very little trouble. The hardest part is already over. You may have to change something here or tweak something there to get it perfect, but today that's going to be surprisingly easy. Don't worry. Everything's going to be fine.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Have you given much thought to your future? Have you prepared a little safety net for yourself? How about your next egg? You may not be particularly concerned about these topics, but maybe you should be. A loved one is pushing you to make practical plans. Go along with that person's ideas today. You'll be glad you did.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) You could run into a controversy today. Your partner doesn't quite agree with you about how things should be done. At first there seems to be no room for compromise, but that's not the case. You're both firm in your opinions, but willing to learn. Get an objective third party to act as mediator, if necessary.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) It's time to get back to work. The moon has gone into Capricorn, and that usually means you have to get busy. You might even be in the mood to do that. Hopefully you are, because that's the agenda. Don't even plan any dates until later in the week, Wednesday at the earliest.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Get together with your sweetheart and discuss your future plans. If you don't have any future plans, then make some up. If you don't have a sweetheart, go where you're likely to find one. Make it easy for love to come to you, because conditions are right for that to happen.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You're going to come up against a situation that's happened before. You didn't like it then and you might not like it now. The challenge is to handle it differently this time. Come from love instead of defending your position. Listen to the other person. You don't have to agree. All you have to do is really hear.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You're trying to do something you're not quite sure about. Conditions aren't really supportive, either. Somebody doesn't want you to achieve what you have in mind. Look at this as an opportunity to put new skills to work. When you get to the other side of this, you can use them for something else. So stop worrying about it.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) It looks like a friend of yours could be having domestic problems. This doesn't involve you directly, but you can be a big help. You're able to see matters more objectively, so offer your insight. Have the couple focus on the results they'd like to produce in about two years.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) If you're following somebody who can't make up his or her mind, you could get pretty frustrated. You're an excellent coach, and your talent is to lead others. You're often put in a position where that's necessary, so you might feel stressed, but that's OK. Everything is working the way it was designed to function.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You may have made an offer in jest, but somebody's holding you to it. It should turn out OK, but you'll have to try something you're not sure will work. It's a little too soon to be sure everything's been thought through properly. You might tell that to the person who's pushing, and buy yourself a little more time.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Your friends are up against a problem they can't figure out how to solve. You're very creative and intuitive. A hunch you have could lead to the solution. So don't give up, even if things look hopeless. Don't be limited by whether or not you think something's possible. Yours is the sign of faith and miracles, remember?

Birthstone of September: Sapphire — Lapis Lazuli

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Seles retains 3rd Princess Cup title

TOKYO (AFP) — Monica Seles powered past Arantxa Sanchez Vicario here to win the $450,000 Princess Cup tennis tournameot for the third year running Sunday.

The American defending champion, who is unbeaten here since her quarter-final loss in 1990, was forced to go the distance for a 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 victory over the French Open champion from Spain.

"It was an extremely hard fought match," said Seles.

"In the third set, I was lucky with shots and had chances to put the match away, but Arantxa came back. The first and second sets were the same, they could have gone either way."

"It was a good week of tennis for me. I played better with each game, although it was difficult to adjust to the changing conditions with the roof open and closed," said Seles.

Seles, who lost her service in the opening game of the match, often seized on the Spaniard's second serve and broke back in the second and fourth games to lead 3-1.

Sanchez Vicario cleverly angled her approach shots to move Seles around the court in search of an opening, finally breaking back in the seventh game oo her way to taking the first set.

Although most of subsequent games were close, Seles chalked up a big 5-0 lead in the second set before squaring the cootest at one set all, and went a service break up twice in the final set before serving out for the match.

Defending champion Mnnica Seles shows nff her trophy tn the crowd after winning the Toynta Princess Cup tennis tournament beating Arantxa Sanchez Vicarin 4-6, 6-3, 6-4. Sunday's win was Seles' third consecntive title nf the tournament (AP Photo)

Sanchez Vicario said: "I think that it was one or two points that made the difference in the match. The luck today was oo her side. We both ran a lot and played very good points."

Seles stretched her record against Sanchez Vicario to 17 wins and three defeats, collecting the winner's check of $79,000 and forcing the Spaniard to be satisfied with the $36,000 runners-up prize.

It was her fifth victory in Tokyo where she also won in 1991 and 1992. It was also her second title of the year following her triumph at the Canadian Opeo in August and 43rd overall.

Hoddle delays contract talks

LONDON (AFP) — England coach Glenn Hoddle is delaying talks on a new contract deal that would take him through to the 2002 World Cup finals.

Hoddle will only start talks over a new contract if England reach the 2000 European Championship finals, his agent Dennis Roache said Sunday.

Hoddle has almost two years of a four-year deal to run and the Football Association are understood to be keen to see him agree a two-year extension to take in the 2002 World Cup.

"There's enthusiasm from all parties but Glenn's decision, which has been accepted I think by the Football Association, is that those talks will take place only if we qualify for the European Championships," Roache said.

"A four-year contract as England manager is a loog contract and a decision to go on for another two years is a decision not to be taken lightly wheo you consider the pressures you are put under, particularly as we've secn in receot weeks," Roache told BBC Radio Five Live.

Lennnx Lewis of Lnndon, England, lands a left punch during his bout against Zeljko Mavrovic nf Zahreh, Croatia, at Mnhegan Sun Casino in Uncasville, Conn. Lewis wnn the fight in 12 rounds to maintain his WBC heavyweight title (AP Photo)

Lewis retains title

UNCASVILLE, Connecticut (AFP) — Britain's Lennox Lewis kept his crown but did little to improve his standing in the best heavyweight champion debate Saturday with a unanimous decision over Zeljko Mavrovic.

Lewis, making his fourth defence of his World Boxing Council (WBC) heavyweight title, has now won 34 of his 35 professiooal fights, but he failed to post his 28th knockout.

He handed the challenger his first defeat after 27 wins.

The margin of victory was comfortable but Lewis looked anything but for much of the fight.

Mavrovic, who weighed in at 214 pounds to Lewis' 243, offered little in the way of offense, but he stood his ground and at times chased the champion.

"I trained wrong," Lewis said. "I went after my opponents in training. I've beeo chasing after my sparring partners."

Lewis missed a goldeo opportunity to sell himself as an exciting draw in the heavyweight ranks.

Evander Holyfield, holder of the World Boxing Association (WBA) and International Boxing Federation (IBF) versions of the heavyweight title, struggled to a unimpressive unanimous 12-round decision over challenger Vaughn Bean just a week earlier.

Lewis, hoping to put together a multi-million dollar fight with Holyfield, said before the bout that he hoped to "make a statement" against Mavrovic.

"I made the statement that I can adjust in the ring. Holyfield made a statement that he can adjust in the ring," he said. "Some opponents just give you a hard time in there. When you are No. 1 in the world, they train very hard and dedicate a lot. I'm sure that guy Vaughn Bean trained hard for Evander Holyfield." Judge Francisco Ciminale of Italy scored the bout 117-111, Boh Logist of Belgium had it 117-112 and Tommy Kaczmarak of the United States scored it 119-109.

The fight opened slowly with Lewis content to use his jab and superior boxing skills. By the third round, Lewis was toying with the challenger, daring him to throw a power punch.

The fourth round saw Lewis land one of his biggest punches of the fight, an overhand right that appeared to stun Mavrovic. But Lewis was unable to follow up with any pressure and the challenger regrouped.

In the sixth, Lewis landed a pair of devastating uppercuts but again was unable to finish Mavrovic, who not only stood up to the champ but attempted to answer given any chance. The Croatian's best moment came in the seventh wheo he landed a left uppercut to the head, sending the champion into the ropes.

The mohawk-haired Mavrovic attempted to follow with combinations but Lewis answered with 20 seconds left, fending the challenger off with a left jab and right cross. Lewis had the fight in control after that but at no point did he seriously attempt to press the action or finish off Mavrovic.

By the 10th, Lewis was speoding as much energy evading punches as landing them. He spent the last six minutes jabbing from the outside and looked tired.

He denied fatigue was due to lack of cooditioning.

"You have to remember, he is undefeated," Lewis said.

Bayern Munich remain unbeaten

BERLIN (AP) — Brazilian striker Giovane Elber scored with three minutes to play Saturday against Werder Bremen to keep Bayern Munich's record spotless in the Bundesliga.

With a workmanlike victory, Munich won its sixth straight to open the season, one short of the league record the team compiled in 1995-1996.

But defending champion FC Kaiserslautern let a two-goal lead slip away in a 3-2 loss to VfL Bochum, while playing four non-European Union members at the same time, which is against the rules.

The mistake came after Danish defender Michael Schjoenberg broke his leg in the 38th minute during a collision, weakening the team's already suspect defense.

"That was a shock for us, even for an old fox like me," said Rehhagel, 61, explaining why he accidentally sent in Nigerian Pascal Ojigwe.

"It was a black day for Kaiserslautern. I've already apologised to my players," he added.

Elber putted in a header that former German national team defender Dieter Eilts failed to clear at the line to lift Munich, which appeared to be hoarding its strength for the Champions League match Wednesday against Manchester United.

Manchester's coach, Alex Ferguson, was in the stands to watch the match.

Bayern moved five points clear, although several rivals also posted wins and showed signs of regaining form after early season slumps.

Bayer Leverkusen slipped past Schalke 1-0 as Ulf Kirsten, the league's leading marksman the past two seasons, eoded a scoring drought with a 52od minute goal.

Borussia Dortmund, aided by the recent return of Lars Ricken from injury, also edged VfL Wolfsburg 2-1 and VfB Stuttgart beat Moenchengladbach 3-2.

MSV Duisburg was also held to a 2-2 draw by Freiburg, while on Friday second-place 1860 Munich beat Hertha Berlin 2-0 and Hamburger SV woo 1-0 against visiting Hansa Rostock.

Ricken, the hero of Dortmund's Champions Cup wio two years ago, beat the Wolfsburg defenders with a 27th-minute header.

But after Sead Kapetanovic equalised six minutes later,

Dortmund secured its win with former German national team player Thomas Haessler cooverting a 66th minute penalty.

A pair of goals by Austria's Toni Polster wasn't enough for Moenchengladbach to beat Stuttgart, which got a gamewinner from Croatia's Zvonimir Soldoto with six minutes to play.

Stuttgart's two strikers, Jonathan Akpoborie and Fredi Bobic, also scored for their team.

Kaiserslautern, unbeatable last season at home at the Betzenberg, held a 2-0 lead after goals by Juergen Rische and Olaf Marschall.

But Bochum, sending six players 22 or yoooger onto the pitch, again exploited Kaiserslautern's shaky defense with goals by Thomas Reis, South Africa's Delron Buckley and Slovenia's Emir Dzafic.

Family celebrates Griffith Joyner's life, blasts critics

LAKE FOREST, California (AFP) — Florence Griffith Joyner's joy in competitioo and in life were celebrated here Saturday at a funeral service for the world record-holding sprinter who died on Monday.

Family and frieods recalled with affection the flamboyant fingernails and fashion statements that caught the attention of Flo-Jo's fans worldwide.

But they also remembered a warm-hearted, loyal woman who was survived by her hushand, Al Joyner, and seven-year-old daughter, Mary Ruth.

"I keep asking myself why did this happen," said Al Joyner, the 1984 Oympic triple jump champion.

Joyner, trying to suppress tears, was supported at the podium hy his sister Jackie Joyner-Kersee, the heptathlon world record holder.

He recalled that their own mother had died at the age of 37. Florence Griffith Joyner was just 38 when she died in her sleep on Monday.

"One thing about Florence Griffith Joyner that nobody ever saw was that she gave unconditional love, regardless," Joyner said.

"I'm goiog to miss you," he added as he gazed down at the casket covered in a spray of white flowers.

Mary Ruth, dressed in a shimmery pink dress, sang a song for her mother, with just a little prompting from her Aunt Jackie.

Neices recalled with love the exotic gifts she hrought them from around the world, as well as the party dresses she lent them.

Al Joyner eulngises his late wife, Florence Griffith Joyner, as his sister Jackie Joyner Kersee, left, and his 7-year-old daughter Mary Ruth listen during the funeral service fnr the Olympic track star at Saddlehack Community Church in Lake Fnrest, Calif (AP Photo)

But along with the affection was anger over the persistent speculation that Griffith Joyner's dominant performance at the 1988 Seoul Olympics was drug-assisted.

The rumours resurfaced after her death, despite the fact that Griffith Joyner never failed a drug test during her career.

Griffith Joyner, a silver medallist in the 1984 Games, triumphed in Seoul, winning three gold medals and adding the 200m world record to the 100m world mark she had set at the U.S. Olympic trials.

"I've heard whole lot of bad thiogs, but I doo't hear too many people saying what they've done wrong," said Bobby Kersee, Griffith Joyner's one-time coach and husband of Jackie Joyner Kersee.

"What's hindering their performance? This is the time to look at yourself. Florence has given you the time. She stopped hy here to say, 'You take a look at yourself.'"

Addressing Mary Ruth, Kersee said: "Your Mama wants you to know that all those tarnishing, poisonous lies can't hurt her no more. The deadly, scorpion sting of reporters don't matter no more.

"God is coaching her now."

Carol Land, who met Griffith Joyner in junior high school and spoke on behalf of a tight-knit group of friends, was also angry.

"I'm going to be like Mr. Kersee and speak my mind," she said. "My Bible tells me to give honor to who honor is due. If no one else in America gives honor to her, we do here today. She deserves hooor."

Land recalled her youth with Griffith Joyner in Watts, the impoverished Los Angeles neighborhood that was the scene of crippling riots in the 1960s.

"I think about us growing up in Watts. Watts didn't afford us time to slander each other and put each other down," Land said.

She said likened Griffith Joyner to a flower flourishing in "a little crevice of America."

"Florence shined a light on America and they didn't give her her due," she said. But we give her her due today.

The music-filled service was attended hy some 1,500 people. International Olympic Committee Vice President Anita DeFrantz read a tribute from IOC Presideot Juan Antonio Samaranche. U.S. Olympic Committee President Bill Hybl praised Griffith Joyner as a model for the current crop of young women athletes.

The mourners included sprinter Gail Devers, sprinter and National Football League player Willie Gault, hurdler Kevin Young, decathlete Bruce Jenner and tennis player Zina Garrison.

"Florence was a dreamer," Boh Kersee said. "She was a hard worker. The first one out to practice and the last to leave. Florence was a warrior.

"I know she ran a race faithfully run."

Jalabert may miss world championships

MADRID (AFP) — Freoch cycliog star Laurent Jalabert said Suoday he could opt out of the World Championships next month because of "physical and psychological" tiredness.

Jalabert, currently competiog in the Tour of Spain, said he was not sure he would go to the championships in Valkenburg in the Netherlands starting on October 7.

"I'm physically and psychologically tired. The championships are important but I'm oot sure I'll go," he said.

Jalabert, a key critic of the authorities' handling of a drugs scandal during this year's Tour de France, added he had also been affected by a suspension threat hanging over him after publicly criticising cycling's governing body.

Several other top riders will also miss the championships.

The riders of the Festina team, thrown out of the Tour de France after banned drugs were fouod in one of their back-up cars, cannot compete due to ongoing investigations.

That will mean reigning world champion Laurent Brochard of France not defending his title while top Swiss rider Alex Zulle will also be barred.

The winner of last year's Tour de France, Germany's Jan Ullrich, has also pulled out because of a tendon injury.

Chelsea's Italian Striker Gianfranco Zola celehrates with the crowd after scoring the second goal against Middlesbrough during their English FA Premiership match at Chelsea's Stamford Bridge ground. Chelsea won 2-0 (AP Photn)

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Italy's Andrea Gaudenzi, left, and teammate Diegn Nargiso, right, hug team captain Paoln Bertolucci to celebrate their victory nver the United States in the semifinal dnubles match of the Davis Cup Tennis Tournament in Milwaukee. Gaudenzi and Nargiso defeated the United States team of Todd Martin and Justin Gimelstob 6-4, 7-6, 5-7, 2-6, 6-3 (AP Pboto)

Bjorkman gives Sweden 4-0 lead

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Jonas Bjorkman came from 1-4 in the second set to beat Carlos Moya 6-3, 7-5 Sunday and gave Swedeu a 4-0 lead over Spain in the Davis Cup semifinal.

It was the third victory for Bjorkman this weekend. He won Friday's first singles in four sets against Alex Corretja and teamed with Nicklas Kulti to win Saturday's doubles that clinched Sweden's 12th trip to the finals.

The defending champions will face Italy, which took an unbeatable 3-0 lead over the United States in the other semifinal in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in the Dec. 4-6 final in Italy.

Davis Cup rookie Thomas Johansson was to play Corretja in the last singles match later Sunday at the Royal Tennis Hall, the site of Sweden's first Davis Cup triumph in 1975.

Football Association Shield

Kufrsoum meet Hussein tonight in Irbid final

By Aleen Bannayan

AMMAN — Two surprise teams, Kufrsoum and Al Hussein, eliminated top teams to reach Monday night's 1998 Jordan Football Association (JFA) Shield Championship final — the fourth of the Kingdom's annual soccer competitions.

Al Hussein's last and only major title was the 1994 Shield in which they beat Al Faisali while Kufrsoum have never won any of the four major titles.

The team was promoted to the Premier League only three years ago and, unlike other newcomers who are usually demoted in a year's time, have maintained a constant form ever since.

While Al Hussein's wio tonight will automatically give them the title since they finished the competition with an unbeaten record, Kufrsoum will have to win tonight's game to force a deciding match for the title since they lost one match earlier in the competition.

Record-holding teams like titleholders Al Faisali lost to both finalists; Al Wihdat lost to Al Qadissieh and Shabab Al Hussein, while Al Ramtha also lost to Kufrsoum last week.

The month-long event brought together Premier League teams only competing without their national team players for the first time in the tournament's history as the national team played in the Arab Cup in Qatar.

Al Wihdat, Al Faisali and Al Ramtha, all of whom have won the Shield four times, were the three clubs most affected by the absence of their players while the rest of the teams had their complete lineups ready for competition.

Jamal Abu Abed, who retired from international duty this year, missed Al Faisali's lineup due to injury, while Al Wihdat missed seven players in addition to captain Yousef Ammouri who was suspended by the JFA for three matcbes for unsportmanlike conduct.

The JFA Shield is the last major soccer event of the season. Premier League matches are still on hold for now pending the return of the national team with two more weeks remaining for the conclusion of the first leg.

Al Wihdat, looking for their 5th consecutive Premier League title, won the first of the season's titles when they clinched their fourth Cup Winners' Cup.

Al Faisali beat Al Wihdat to win their record 10th Jordan Cup last month. They currently top Premier League standings on goal difference over Al Wihdat.

Al Faisali's last major titles were the 1995 Jordan Cup and the 1997 Federation Shield. Al Wihdat bave won the Jordan Cup and Cup Winners Cup in the last two years and the Premier League in the last four.

JFA Shield record (runner-up in parenthesis)

1981	Jazireh (Wihdat)
1982	Wihdat (Amman)
1983	Wihdat (Ramtha)
1984	Amman (Hussein)
1985	Amman (Faisali)
1986	Jazireh (Faisali)
1987	Faisali (Wihdat)
1988	Wihdat (Hussein)
1989	Ramtha (Wihdat)
1990	Ramtha (Hussein)
1991	Faisali (Wihdat)
1992	Faisali (Hussein)
1993	Ramtha (Qadissieh)
1994	Hussein (Faisali)
1995	Wihdat
1996	Ramtha (Hussein)
1997	Faisali (Wihdat)

Britain advance to World Group, take unbeatable 3-1 lead

NOTTINGHAM (AP) — Tim Henman defeated Leander Paes of India 7-6 (7-3), 6-2, 7-6 (7-5) Sunday to move Britain into next year's World Group, the elite 16 of the Davis Cup, for the first time since 1992.

The victory, in just over two hours, gave Britain an unbeatable 3-1 lead over India in the best-of-five tie. Britain won Friday's two singles but India stayed alive with a doubles win Saturday as Paes and Mahesh Bbupathi defeated Henman and Neil Broad.

"It just sbows how important the tiebreaks are," Henman said. "We lost both yesterday in doubles and we won both today and that was probably the difference."

"It was an important match to get back into the World Group and it was nice to come through," Henman added. "We've got the team that deserves to be among the top 16 nations." Added coach David Lloyd. "I think it's extremely important for British tennis. Hopefully, we can get a good draw and win it."

The match, delayed 45 minutes by rain, saw Henman take a 4-2 lead in the first set, but Paes — the India No. 1 — rallied to force a tiebreaker.

In the tiebreaker, Henman went up 6-3 as Paes missed two volleys and then won with a backhand service return that Paes hit into the net.

Henman won the second set in 29 minutes as Paes won the first game but lost the next five. The third set also went to a tiebreaker after Henman blew an early lead.

DAVIS CUP

Australia beat Uzbekistan 5-0; Rafter's knee injury flares up

TOWNSVILLE, Australia (AP) — Australia moved back into the top ranks of Davis Cup tennis on Sunday, but it was Pat Rafter's knee that was the center of attention.

U.S. Open champion Rafter, who has decided to pull out of this week's Grand Slam Cup in Germany to rest his sore left knee, and Jason Stoltenberg both breezed through their reverse singles matcbes Sunday against Uzbekistan to produce a 5-0 result in the qualifying tie at the Townsville Entertainment Center.

Rafter hardly worked up a sweat in winning 6-2, 6-4 against 395th-ranked Dmitri Tomashevich while Stoltenberg blew away 254th-ranked Oleg Ogorodov 6-3, 6-3.

The Australians' win atoned for the humbling first-round home loss to Zimbabwe at Mildura, Victoria in April and means they will be one of the top 16 nations to play in the World Group in 1999.

With Todd Woodbridge and Mark Woodforde giving Australia an unbeatable 3-0 lead by beating Ogorodov and Tomashevich in straight sets Saturday, the main interest in the post-match press conference turned to Rafter's knee.

The injury hampered Rafter during last year's Australian circuit and Wimbledon campaign, but he learned to handle the problem well enough to win his second straight U.S. Open title two weeks ago.

"It's a little bit of a problem at the moment," Rafter said of the knee.

"It's been for years, it's come and gone — but now it's more ecoming than going. I've eight weeks to go until the end of the year and I don't think it's going to get a lot worse in that time, so I'm fine with it.

"When the adrenalin's pumping you don't really feel it — I get more upset with it if I feel it on my serve and I can't push off."

Rafter said he had decided to bypass the Grand Slam Cup in Hanover this week in order to rest the knee.

He will stay in Australia until late this week before flying out to start an eight-week European campaign in Switzerland and then return to Australia for more rest.

"I really have to address the situation (with the knee) when I get home, maybe while I'm over there," said Rafter, ruling out any chance of surgery. "There's probably a bit of tendinitis so it really needs a good rest."

Rafter and Stoltenberg laid the foundations for Australia's clean sweep of Uzbekistan in Friday's singles rubbers when Rafter beat Ogorodov 6-3, 6-3, 6-4 and Stoltenberg beat Vadim Kutsenko 7-5, 6-1, 6-0.

Hakkinen wins Luxembourg GP, world title goes to the wire

NURBURGRING (AFP) — Mika Hakkinen stopped the rot here on Sunday as he produced a fine drive to win the Luxembourg Grand Prix and head for the final race of the season with a wafer-thin advantage over rival Michael Schumacher.

The Finn took the race ahead of the German after an intriguing tactical tussle to go to Japan in November with 90 points compared to Schumacher's 86.

Third place on Sunday went to Hakkineo's McLaren teammate David Coulthard.

Schumacher, to claim the championsbip, will now not only have to win the final race but hope Hakkinen finishes no higher than third.

Should the Finn come second behind Schumacber at Suzuka, he will be crowned world champion because of more second-place finisbes.

Sunday's race was a triumph for Hakkinen and McLaren after Hakkinen had been relegated to the second row of the grid by the two Ferraris during qualifying.

The Finn, however, so dominant during the first half of the season but who saw his 22-point lead finally evaporate at Monza a fortnight ago, turned the tables on Schumacber to take his seventh win this year.

There was an early surprise when Eddie Irvine, who began the race on the front row of the grid for the best start in his five-year career alongside his Ferrari teammate, overtook Schumacher before the first bend.

But he allowed the German back past him before the end of the first lap, closing the door on the McLarens.

The race settled down immediately as Schumacher, who had won five of the previous eight Grand Prix to the two woo by Hakkinen, forged away, leaving the Ulsterman to ride sbotgun and watcb his back.

Scbumacher's lead over Hakkinen was more than five seconds after 10 of 67 laps before Hakkinen began to pressure Irvine for second position.

When the Finn finally got past on the 14th lap he found himself almost eight seconds behind the German.

But he had cut the gap to five secoods wben Schumacher pitted on the 23rd lap for tyres and fuel. The stop saw the first two switcb positions, Hakkinen now almost 20 seconds clear.

That advantage seemed set to be wiped out wben the Finn stopped a few laps afterwards but a crucial McLaren pit stop allowed Hakkinen to burst back onto the track and swerve out just in front of the Ferrari's nose.

The two rivals remained locked together, only a few metres separating them, at the halfway stage, with David Coulthard in third in the other McLareo half a minute behind and Irvine in fourtb.

Hakkineo, however, so unhappy with his car during qualifying, eked out a few more precious teoths of a secood to put daylight between him and his rival, leading by around two secoods with just over a third of the race to run.

The key to the race now lay with the second pit stops.

Schumacber went back in for new tyres and a fuel top-up on lap 46 and Hakkinen did the same on lap 47, this time rejoining the Nurburgring with a three-second buffer.

With 10 laps to go, the McLaren was more than five seconds clear. The Finn, after manoeuvring through the back-markers, retained that gap as he stormed to the cbequered flag.

Juventus of Turin Edgar Davids, in front, tries to control the ball as Parma's Alain Boghossian of France, attacks from behind during the Italian League in Parma's stadium. Parma won 1-0 (AP Phnto)

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JORDAN TIMES e-mail: jotimes@go.com.jo

Iraq welcomes Turkey's decision to restore ties

ANKARA (AP) — Iraq's charge d'affaires in Ankara on Sunday welcomed Turkey's decision to restore full diplomatic affairs, after more than seven years of sour relations between the neighbours.

Deputy Premier Bulent Ecevit announced Saturday that Turkey was sending an ambassador to Baghdad. Iraq's own ambassador to Ankara left last year for what Iraqi charge d'affaires T. Hamandi said were administrative reasons, rather than political.

"It is a step in the right direction," Hamandi said Sunday of Turkey's initiative, without saying whether Iraq would reciprocate by sending an ambassador back to Turkey.

Relations between the two countries have been helped by their common worry about two Iraqi Kurdish groups. Both countries oppose a U.S.-brokered pact that the two groups signed Sept. 17 ending their rivalry in northern Iraq, which the groups have controlled since Western allies set up a haven for Iraqi Kurds after the 1991 Gulf war.

In the past, disputes over Turkey's close ties with the United States, over sharing of water resources, and over Iraqi Kurds' de facto autonomous zone have all served to sour relations between Turkey and Iraq. Turkey has not had an ambassador in Iraq since the Gulf war.

Iraq pins hopes on Annan to escape sanctions trap

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq's Tareq Aziz meets U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan on Monday to try to prevent the latest standoff over arms inspections from tipping into crisis.

The Iraqi deputy prime minister will ask Annan to spell out the details of a "comprehensive review" of Iraq's relations with the United Nations promised by the Security Council if Baghdad resumes full cooperation with the weapons inspectors.

Annan is likely to start by reminding Aziz that nothing can be done until Iraq rescinds its August 5 decision to suspend inspections by the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM).

"There will be very hot bargaining," said one diplomat in Baghdad. "There are crucial issues such as the timing and terms of reference of the review and who will conduct it." Right now, Iraq faces the daunting prospect of indefinite sanctions after the Security Council decided on September 9 to suspend its periodic reviews of the crippling embargo imposed after Baghdad's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"The people of Iraq will not let others turn it into a big camp of refugees fed from its own resources," Foreign Minister Mohammad Saeed Al Sahaf said in New York on Saturday.

If the Annan-Aziz talks fail, the United Nations will have to decide what to do about Iraq's defiance, especially if it carries out a threat to end all cooperation with the inspectors, including closing arms monitoring stations.

On Thursday, the five permanent Security Council members said the comprehensive review could take place only after "the unconditional resumption of Iraqi cooperation" with the UNSCOM and the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency, in charge of eliminating Baghdad's weapons of mass destruction.

Annan's special envoy Prakash Shah left Baghdad a week ago after spending nearly two weeks looking for a solution.

Iraq, insisting it has no more mass destruction weapons to eliminate, complains that its past cooperation with UNSCOM has gone unrecognised and brought an end to sanctions no nearer.

"In Iraq's perception, sanctions are an open-ended political game," one Baghdad-based diplomat said.

The United States, Britain and UNSCOM have in the past accused Iraq of making sustained efforts to conceal details of its nuclear, chemical, biological and missile programmes.

The United States and Britain say they have ruled out no option, including force, to resolve the latest standoff, but acknowledge that this idea has little international support.

"Indeed, today, outside the United States, not a single country is calling for the use of force to respond to Saddam Hussein's latest refusal to cooperate with UNSCOM," U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Martin Indyk reminded a congressional hearing this month.

A European diplomat said the Iraqi leadership appeared to trust Annan despite the breakdown of the February agreement.

"Thanks to him there was no bombing," he said. "Now the Iraqis' main hope is a general review and a new approach."

Israeli Arabs clash with police in land dispute; around 40 hurt

TEL AVIV (AP) — About 40 people were hurt Sunday in violent clashes in north-central Israel between Israeli police and Israeli Arabs involving a land dispute, army radio said.

Police confirmed that eight officers were among the injured in the fighting near the predominantly Arab town of Umm Al Fahm, 30 kilometres southeast of the port city of Haifa.

The fighting erupted as Israeli police moved in to tear down a tent erected by protesters who claimed the land was unfairly confiscated. Demonstrators threw rocks and firebombs at the police, who responded with tear gas.

Radio reports said dozens of protesters were hurt, including the mayor of Umm Al Fahm.

A demonstrator told army radio that police fired rubber-coated bullets and live ammunition. The Israeli police commander, Alik Ron, said the reports were being checked.

Police spokeswoman Linda Menuhin did not confirm live ammunition was used, but said police lives were endangered in the clash. Under Israeli regulations, soldiers and police may open fire with live bullets if their lives are in danger.

Israeli authorities say the disputed area, near the northern edge of the West Bank, is an Israeli army firing range. They say an agreement was reached with the residents to nationalise about 50 hectares of land, in exchange for about six times as much land elsewhere.

Residents of Umm Al Fahm put up a tent on the disputed land three weeks ago. Israeli officials said they tried to negotiate with the protesters and persuade them to leave on their own, and sent in police to evict them after those efforts failed.

About 20 per cent of Israel's citizens are Arabs. They live within the original boundaries of the state, and do not include more than two million Palestinians who live in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

HANGING OUT, SAFE: Teenagers and youths spend time in the Casbah, the old quarter of Algiers, Sunday. The Casbah a Muslim fundamentalist stronghold used by armed guerrillas for years is now under government troops control (Reuters photo)

Iran says Rushdie 'insults' add to Muslims' hatred

TEHRAN (R) — The death edict against Salman Rushdie cannot be revoked and the British author's "insulting remarks" will increase the hatred of Muslims towards him, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman said Sunday.

The statement was made by Mahmoud Mohammadi, who is tipped to be Iran's new ambassador to Britain following their agreement to upgrade diplomatic relations as part of a deal in which the Iranian government distanced itself from a 1989 fatwa or religious decree against Rushdie for blasphemy against Islam in his book "The Satanic Verses."

Kayhan, an influential hardline daily, called on the government to carry out the fatwa and kill Rushdie.

"The government and statesmen of the Islamic Republic of Iran... have the duty to prepare the grounds and implement this edict, and it is evident that they should not and cannot give the least guarantee on preventing the execution of this edict," it said in an editorial.

Tehran Radio quoted the foreign ministry spokesman as saying the promotion of relations between Iran and Britain could be analysed in the framework of world developments and the international community's new understanding of realities in Iran.

"At the same time, the irrevocability of the late imam's edict is a fact," the radio quoted Mahmoudi as saying.

He said it was surprising that while Britain's Foreign Secretary Robin Cook explicitly announced on Thursday that the British government and the European Union did not support insults against religious sanctities, Rushdie continued his "insulting remarks."

The commentary did not specify which remarks Mahmoudi was referring to. Rushdie said at a news conference in London on Friday he did not regret writing "The Satanic Verses."

Asked whether he would apologise for having written it or bow to demands to have it removed from bookstores, the Indian-born author replied: "There is not a chance in hell of the book being withdrawn. We have not fought a battle for freedom of speech to give in at the last moment."

Mahmoudi said: "Rushdie's insulting remarks will certainly increase the hatred of the Muslims of the world towards him," Tehran Radio said.

The hardline conservative newspaper Jomhuri Islami said Sunday the edict issued by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, spiritual leader of the Iranian revolution, shortly before he died in 1989 was still effective and nothing had changed to Rushdie's benefit.

"But maybe the optimism of Rushdie and his supporters would pave the way and accelerate the execution of the edict," it added.

A $2.5 million bounty to any Muslim who kills Rushdie remains on offer from an Iranian foundation and his life is still in danger, Tehran newspapers said.

Taleban sends 4,000 volunteers to border

KABUL (AFP) — The Taleban militia on Sunday strengthened defences along the Iranian border with the first deployment of volunteers since Islamic clerics declared that the entire Afghan nation should be ready for a holy war.

About 4,000 volunteer troops were sent from the central districts of Farah province which borders Iran in the west, official Radio Shariat said.

More than 200,000 Iranian troops have massed along the Afghan border as tensions continue to mount after the murder of eight Iranian diplomats and one journalist in a northern Afghan city six weeks ago.

The radio said the volunteers, all aged over 18, had "left for the battlefield to defend the country's borders."

Estimates have put the number of Taleban soldiers in the border area at up to 30,000. However, analysts say this would include reserves, sympathisers and people who already live in the area.

The number of battle-hardened Taleban troops has been put at around 5,000.

The deployment follows a declaration in Kabul last week by more than 2,000 Islamic clerics that all Afghans must be prepared to fight if Iran invades.

Afghan mullahs spent four days deliberating before issuing a fatwa urging leaders from both countries to act with restraint. However, they also warned that the entire Afghan nation should be ready for a holy war if Iran made good on its threats to attack.

The Iranian diplomats were killed in the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif after it fell to Taleban forces on Aug. 8 during the militia's northern offensive against Afghan opposition troops. The purist Islamic militia now controls about two-thirds of the country.

It has achieved sweeping victories in the north and in central provinces including Bamiyan, populated largely by Shiite ethnic Hazaras who form the pro-Iranian Hezb-e-Wahdat faction in the anti-Taleban alliance.

Observers say the Iranian troop buildup could be aimed at a number of strategic objectives. This may have prompted the Taleban to deploy volunteers from neighbouring Farah instead of from more distant provinces.

Taleban to start punisment for erroneous praying

KABUL (AFP) — Taleban leader Mulla Mohammad Omar on Sunday warned that Afghan citizens failing to correctly recite Islamic prayers after the expiry of a six-month moratorium would be punished, Radio Shariat reported.

Omar ordered all local mullas to ensure residents know how to correctly offer their five times daily prayers.

"Once again, all the mosques' imams are seriously ordered to try hard to teach their followers [locals] the correct methods of offering prayers," Omar's order was quoted as saying.

The order warned that after a moratorium expires in around two months time, examiners charged with fostering virtue and suppressing vice [known as religious police] would punish both Imams and followers for failing to pass the test.

Omar issued an order around four months ago giving the Afghan faithful six months to perfect their knowledge of routine prayers.

It was followed by on-the-spot checks by armed Taleban soldiers in Kabul and other cities, asking citizens to answer all sorts of religious questions and to recite Arabic verses of the Koran.

Many people were beaten with leather straps as punishment when they made mistakes.

Imams conduct daily classes on Islamic texts.

The puritanical Taleban militia, which now controls 90 per cent of Afghan territory, enforce a strict interpretation of Islamic Sharia law.

Iran moves ahead abroad, finds itself at crossroads at home

TEHRAN (R) — Through debate and diplomacy, Iran has shed its status as pariah state and is taking its place on the world stage as a voice of reason.

Milestones were marked in the past week when President Mohammad Khatami addressed world leaders at the U.N. General Assembly in New York and Iran publicly dissociated itself from a decade-old death threat against British writer Salman Rusbdie for blasphemy against Islam.

The moves gave credence to Iran's claim to have weathered U.S. attempts to isolate it because of alleged state sponsorship of terrorism, attempts to acquire nuclear weapons technology and trying to wreck Middle East peace efforts.

The normalisation of diplomatic relations with Britain, the U.S.'s closest European ally, as part of a deal ending the Rushdie affair capped Iran's breakout from U.S. containment.

The United States has been unable to prevent big energy industry contracts with foreign firms and more and more companies are beating a path to Iran's door looking for business.

With Iran's more moderate tone come foreign tourists from such places as France, Germany, Italy, Japan and even the United States — an important contribution to civilisation, as Khatami noted on Sunday when he addressed a tourism convention.

But at home the struggle to control the future of the revolution has intensified and political tension has increased.

Iran is undergoing a factional struggle over strict adherence to Islamic principles advocated by conservatives or progress towards a more relaxed version in line with the moderate president's vision of a civil society.

Which faction takes the upper hand could become apparent in a month's time when voters elect the Assembly of Experts, a body whose most significant power is the appointment and dismissal of Iran's supreme leader.

The fundamentalist old guard of the revolution that ended 2,500 years of Persian monarchy nearly two decades ago is mounting a backlash against what conservatives call a "creeping cultural coup" encouraged by increased civil liberties.

Much is written in Iran's sharply polarised press about creeping coups. Hardline members of the Shiite Muslim clerical establishment criticise social and political reforms carried out by the Khatami administration as a risk to national security and a threat to Islam.

They fear that the moderate clergyman's call for dialogue with the American people, an initiative which many Iranians embrace with enthusiasm, will open the door to a Western cultural onslaught and undermine the Islamic republic.

Moderate allies of Khatami, on the other hand, speak of a creeping coup against the president through a crackdown on liberal publications which have transformed public debate by tackling topics previously deemed taboo.

Most important of these is the role of the supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who controls the armed forces, foreign policy and the judiciary and whose word on all political and religious issues is paramount and cannot be challenged.

Khatami emerged from relative obscurity as head of Iran's national library to forge a rainbow coalition of supporters that vaulted him into the presidency by a landslide last year.

Mild-mannered and scholarly, he is known to prefer principle to compromise and yet remains non-confrontational.

The conservative backlash has led to the banning of the outspoken liberal newspaper Tous and the arrest of four senior staff on charges of acting against Iran's national security.

Moderate groups have criticised the hard-handed moves against Tous, but liberal Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Ataollah Mohajerani has distanced himself from the newspaper.

Mohajerani, a close ally of Khatami, has been repeatedly threatened with impeachment by the conservative-dominated parliament which earlier this year dismissed Abdollah Nouri as interior minister by a vote of no confidence.

And the popular mayor of Tehran, a key Khatami strategist, was tried and convicted of graft charges which his supporters said were politically inspired by the conservative judiciary.

For the time being, at least, a common adversary — the purist Islamic Taleban militia in neighbouring Afghanistan — has united Iranians of all political persuasions against an external threat.

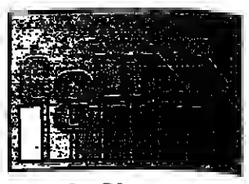
But some moderates fear that conservatives are exploiting the crisis to move against the liberal press.

Sabre-rattling against the Taleban across Iran's lengthy eastern border has reached fever pitch with 200,000 soldiers and 70,000 Revolutionary Guards massed in frontier provinces.

The original reason for sending them there — the killing of 10 Iranian diplomats and a journalist last month — seems almost to have been lost in the rapidly escalating tension.

Defence Minister Ali Shamkhani now speaks of protecting Afghanistan's ethnic minorities — including Iran's Shiite co-religionists — against genocide by the Sunni Taleban, and fighting drugs traffickers who smuggle narcotics across the border to users in Iran and on to European cities.

Khamenei has ruled out a military confrontation with the Taleban and Khatami says Iran will use diplomatic channels to ease tension. But the armed forces remain poised to launch war games on the border in coming days.



Jackie Chan says complains of stereotyping

TAIPEI (AP) — Hong Kong motion picture star Jackie Chan has finally begun enjoying a taste of success in Hollywood, but says that Chinese people in American films are too often typecast as cops or killers. "There are few roles for Chinese unless they specially write a script for us. Then its cop, cop, cop, killer, killer killer," Chan was shown as saying in a broadcast televised Sunday in Taipei, where the actor-director is promoting his latest film "Rush Hour." Rush Hour, Chan's first Hollywood production in over a decade, shocked industry insiders by grossing $33 million in its mid-September opening week in the United States.

Carling: 'I did love Princess Diana'

LONDON (R) — Former England rugby captain Will Carling said he had loved Princess Diana. Speaking publicly for the first time about his friendship with the late princess, Carling, 32, told the Daily Mail he had fallen for Diana's flirtatious charm when they first met at a London health club in 1995. "I did love the princess. I was flattered by the princess' attention. I'd defy any man to say he wouldn't be," he said. "I found her incredibly attractive and she had this gift of sensing unhappiness in others," said Carling, who met Diana as his marriage to television presenter Julia Carling was in trouble.

A prince by any other name

WASHINGTON (AP) — Changing his name hasn't helped Prince Edward deflect fame. To get people to focus on his small film company, Ardent Productions Ltd., Queen Elizabeth's youngest child calls himself Edward Windsor. As in, Windsor Castle, the House of Windsor and the Duke of Windsor. "The very fact that people always ask me about my title, means that they're still hung up about it. They're not looking at the programmes we make, they're only looking at the title," Edward said in Saturday's editions of The Washington Post. Running the company is hard enough. Ardent lost money for its first four years but is operating in the black today, he says.

McCartney becomes a chauffeur for a day

LONDON (AP) — Ex-Beatle Sir Paul McCartney became a chauffeur for the day Saturday to drive his daughter to her wedding. Mary McCartney, a 27-year-old photographer, married television producer Alistair Donald, at St. Peter and St. Paul's church in Peasmarsh, a village in Sussex, south of London, near the McCartney home. Sir Paul drove the couple in a vintage car to and from the church. Mary wore a pink dress covered by thin, white embroidered chiffon. Sir Paul's other children, fashion designer Stella and student Jamie, also attended the service.

'Girls still miss out on chess'

PITTSBURGH (AP) — The world's first female grandmaster in chess said girls are still missing out on the game because they are never taught it. Susan Polgar, 29, became a grandmaster in 1991 and once beat the world's fifth-ranked player, Anatoly Karpov. She spoke Saturday to the Pittsburgh Chess Club, which counts several nationally ranked girls among its membership. "Even today in some countries, chess isn't something they teach girls," Polgar said. "It is improving, and once girls start to play, they've shown they have the talent to compete with men."